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What is True Religion?

And Other Addresses

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By
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To the Memory of
Maria Pollock Stewart,
my wife's sainted mother,
this volume is lovingly
dedicated.

FOREWORD

THE sermons of this volume were prepared and delivered within the past two years of my present ministry. The conviction that they should be published has been reached only after repeated pressure from many quarters. I, therefore, herewith broadcast them, with the prayer that through the Spirit of our blessed Lord they may help many others in their efforts to do the will of God on earth as it is done in Heaven.

R. J. M.

BUFFALO, N. Y.

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I

WHAT IS TRUE RELIGION?

"He was called the friend of God."—JAMES 11:23.

WHAT is religion? That is a question as old as human history and as deep as human nature. It cannot be answered by mere words. It cannot be understood by mere ideas. It is something vastly deeper and more vital than words or concepts. To answer this question is to fathom the human soul and to scale the heights of human being. It is to strip human life of its husks and to lay bare its kernel. It reaches below the grave and beyond the heavens. It transcends all theory and touches the mainspring of all truth.

Religion is not something. It is not a creed; it is not a belief; it is not a faith. You cannot analyze or synthesize it; neither can you sub-ordinate or co-ordinate it. You cannot measure or standardize it. It is deeper and higher and wider than the reasonings of man.

Religion is a personal relationship between God and a human soul. It is not a personal belief about God. It is not a personal conviction concerning God. No. Vastly different. Don't be deluded with any such thought. Too long has the

world made this mistake. It has long mistaken the form for the essence, the shadow for the substance. No more could we say that marriage is a theory or conviction concerning love. It is a personal relationship. The text calls it a friendship. In short it meant that Abraham walked with God, and had personal communion with Him.

This is the only kind of religion, the personal kind. In fact the only kind of reality is personal. War does not become real till it becomes personal —till some dear friend or loved one goes forth to do his country's service. Home does not become real till hearts beat as one around the altar fires. Problems are not real till we face them personally; till the flour sack runs out or the coal bin fails, with little or no market supply. Religion is nothing till it becomes personal. When a man begins to seek after communion with God he begins to be religious. When he holds converse with God, his religion is a reality. It is a dynamic. It is a living entity; a ruling factor in his life.

Not only is religion a personal relationship, it is a *friendship* relation between God and a human soul. Friendship! How lovely and beautiful is the word! How sublime the thoughts that cluster around it! Altogether wordless and priceless! What is it? Who can explain it? Who can analyze it? Indeed to attempt it is to spoil it. It is an atmosphere, a fragrance, a life-something we

can only breathe. It is not house or furniture that makes home. No; it is the ineffable union of dear ones, husband and wife, parents and children, that makes home the realest and sweetest place in all the world. So it is with Religion. It does not consist in fine Churches and fine programs of Services or anything visible or external. It is found in the indefinable personal fellowship of God and man. It is a friendship experience with God.

That was a religious time the disciples had when they met with Jesus in the Upper Room, not because they talked and ate together, but because their heartstrings meshed with those of Jesus. And neither they nor the Church has ever forgotten that hour. Another religious hour was when they walked with the Master on the road to Emmaus. Their hearts burned within them as He talked with them by the way. Why? Their hearts burned as they communed with His great burning heart by the way.

So, my friends, don't waste time trying to explain Religion. Just live it. That's the only way you can know anything about it. Never mind whether marriage is a sacrament or a mere ordinance, as husbands and wives keep in loving fellowship with each other. So never mind explanations about Religion, just keep in filial fellowship with the Father.

Religion is not something about God or the Church or worship or the Ten Commandments or

the Gospel of Jesus. It is a vital personal *oneness* with God. To believe *about* God is theology; to walk with Him is Religion. To say there is a God, is a belief; to do His behest, is Religion. To declare the goodness of God, is faith; to trust Him when the way is dark, is Religion. To formulate your faith, is a creed; to realize it, is your Religion. To pray is devotion; to pray and do your best, is Religion. To read the Bible, is an exercise of the soul; to follow its precepts, is Religion. Following your conscience is a moral sequence; following God is Religion. To esteem Jesus is an attitude of mind; to abide in Him is Religion.

We can easily test our Religion to see to what extent it is genuine. This is an age of test. Every machine, before it is sent out into the market, is thoroughly tested. And the simple test is found in the simple question—does it work? Does the automobile work? Does the telephone work? If not, it is either made to work or rejected. Precisely the same thing is true of religion. Its test is—Does it work? The basis of your Religion is your faith in the unfailing goodness of God. The night comes on and the way is dark, do you trust Him? A dear one is taken from your side, health fails or misfortune befalls you, does your heart keep calm and sweet and balanced? Or does it give way to the floodtide of sorrow and trial? Your experience is your answer to the test of your Religion. Your Religion is real, just as it

grips the hand of God and as God grips your heart when all else seems to fail you. The test of Jesus' Religion was in the Garden—the cross ahead. Its vital strength was seen, not when He prayed that the cup might be removed, for the good and bad alike could pray for such. It was seen when upon His face He said, "Nevertheless not my will but Thine be done," and then went out and unflinchingly took up His cross. It's the Job dynamic in us that says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him," the Psalmist spirit that says, "Though the mountains be cast into the sea, yet will I not be afraid." *Has your religion and mine stood the test?*

Another supreme test is how our Religion stands *prosperity.* I believe this is a severer test than that of adversity. It takes a lot of Religion to be prosperous. It takes a lot of Religion to have a fast growing bank account. It takes a lot of Religion to thoroughly enjoy life. It takes a lot of Religion to have good health and a host of friends. Jesus recognized that it was hard for the rich to have Religion enough to get into the Kingdom. O, how often we witness the failure of Religion right here. How often when wealth comes, the Church goes; when loaded with life's gifts, we forget the Giver. Herein is our test. We have been prosperous. God has been especially good to us. Have we continued proportionately faithful to Him? Do we thank Him a little more? Do we love Him a

little better? Do we support His kingdom as proportionately as before? To the extent our Religion has stood this test it is real.

Once more. The test of your Religious reality is seen in how you act on Monday morning when you go back to *business.* How do you meet the temptation to do business in fashion a little off color? How you deal with your fellows in business tells me and tells you the amount of reality there is in your Religion. Religion that doesn't get into a man's business doesn't get into anything else. It doesn's exist. It's a mirage. A man will always take his Religion into his business; he should never take his creed there. He takes his Religion, if he has it. He takes it because he can't help it; it's a vital organic part of himself. To say a man *ought* to take his Religion into his business is as if you would say he ought to take his arm into his business. He could no more leave his Religion behind. For Religion is not something a person *has;* it's what he *is.* Yes, my Religion is my very substance; it goes with me where I go; it thinks when I think; it speaks when I speak; it acts when I act. What I *think* and *say* and *do* is, therefore, the test of my Religion's reality.

How stands the test—your Religion and mine? When temptation assails, when trial befalls, when things go well and when they go ill? How about the moment when your faith is tried? When you see a world of Christian Nations at each other's

throats? When you stand back aghast at the inhuman atrocities of war? When you see slipping from you your heart's dear treasure? When some one has despitefully used you? When there is no gleam of hope ahead? When God seems to have forgotten you, or when He calls you to some noble service? What is your response? Tell me your answer, for that tells me what your Religion is.

My hearers, there is no denominational Religion. There is no Presbyterian or Methodist or Baptist or Catholic Religion, any more than there is Presbyterian or Methodist or Baptist or Catholic marriage. Religion is vastly more vital and transcendent than any such man-made distinctions or classifications. You can't classify it any more than you can classify human life itself.

Religion is far more than a system; it is the fountain of the soul. It is not an institution; it is a spiritual universe in the soul of man. To say "There is a God" is theology; to say "O Lord, Thou art *my* God and King" is *Religion.* To say "Jesus is the Saviour of the world" is the gospel; to say with Thomas, "My Lord and My God!" is the Christian Religion. My Religion is a relationship between God and me. It is a relationship of friendship. And there is no denominational friendship. There are no Presbyterians in Heaven, nor Methodists, nor Baptists, nor Catholics, nor any other sects as such. These words are unknown

there. Only *friends of God* are there. Only those who commune and hold fellowship with Him. In other words, only the religious.

True Religion is true friendship with God. It is true oneness with God. Perfect Religion consists in perfect personal unity with God, perfect love for Him and loyalty to His will. This we see in the Religion of Christ. Jesus never taught Christianity. He couldn't, for it can't be taught—any more than life can be taught. He lived the perfect friendship with God. "I and my Father are one." Christianity cannot be explained; it can only be expressed. It never appears; it only radiates. It is not a theory; it is a life. It is not a system; it is a dynamic. It does not come into our hearts; it wakens within us. It is not a revelation to us; it is a growth within us. It is the eternal personal harmony between God and man in the human soul. Therefore, don't confuse Christianity with the Christian Church or Church membership. These are an organization, while the Christian Religion is an actual living personal experience. The Christian Church is only a fruit, while Christianity is its root.

This brings me to say that, as there is no true fruit without a true root, neither can there be a genuine Christian Church without genuine Christianity as its root. Did Jesus not say to the disciples as they went to establish the Church: "*Abide in me and I in you * * * without me*

ye can do nothing." So will our Religion grow and bear fruit only when it is of this Christ root. My belief about Jesus will not do. My theories concerning Him will not do. It will not be sufficient so say, "I believe He was divine, the Son of God, that He was crucified, dead, and buried, and that He rose the third day and ascended to Heaven and that there He makes perpetual intercession for us." No. All that is not sufficient. I must hold vital personal friendship with Him. He must be to me a personal friend. I must experience a fellowship with Him. Amid the throng I must touch the hem of His garment. I must believe in Him in that I walk with and have fellowship with Him. There is no Christianity but this.

There is no Christianity in the Gospels. There is no Christianity in the Bible. There is no Christianity in sermons. There is no Christianity in confessions of faith. It exists only in a Christian's heart. And, moreover, there is no Christianity that does not show itself Sunday and every other day of the week, in home, in office, in workshop, in season and out of season. It will take me at last to Heaven. It will do vastly more. It will begin right here to make my Heaven on earth and after death it will perfect my Heaven in the Father's house forever. Because Christianity is not something I possess; it is an integral part of myself. It is an eternal friendship with God through His Christ, governing my life and unfolding my destiny

according to the plan of Heaven. So by the fruits shall ye know the tree. Is your daily life Christian? With anxiety do I ask the question. For, apart from your daily life, you have no Christianity. There is no Christian Religion on earth that is not clothed with flesh and blood. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom." Why? Because there is absolutely no Religion in words. Nor is there in deeds. Only in the heart of man. And out of such a heart only are the issues of true religion.

So then the answer to the question, "What is Religion?" is found in the lives of those who possess it. Every Christian is, therefore, a living epistle known and read among men. Men know the Christian Religion only as they know us. Their estimate of us is their estimate of the reality of Christianity. The Divinity of Jesus and the validity of the Gospel are only secondary questions compared with their judgment as to the divinity and validity of *our* daily lives. Men hear about Christ in book and sermon; they see Him only as He appears through us. The world hears about Christianity, but the only Christianity it sees is in the lives of Christians. How much do they see of Christ and His true religion in us? Are we lights set upon a hill? Do men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him? Is His Religion crystallized in us? Are we on such in-

timate personal terms with Him that our love savors of His? Does our very presence speak of His? Does it breathe His spirit? Does it mean so much to us that others, seeing us, long for it too? Are we to the world the conclusive proof of the reality and blessedness of Religion? Men see in us the answer to Religion—What is it? Every day in home and office and workshop and society we are telling the story over and over again. What is the story? Is it the old, old story that Jesus told so beautifully and so savingly long ago? Or is it the old story only half told, unlovely and unsaving? So, be this our daily prayer:

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

II

GROWING A SOUL

"But grow in grace."—II PETER 3:18.

IN Cleveland a motto hangs above the largest department store in Ohio which reads, "Watch us grow." Many times as I caught a glimpse of it, while pastor of a church in that growing metropolis of the State, I was moved with the thought that any business concern which is seized with such a concept *must grow*. Moreover, the very tang of the store seemed to possess the spirit of growth—and growth was everywhere apparent. It struck at the very root of all success—the law of becoming—gaining—developing, increasing, perfecting.

There are two fundamental laws in connection with this text to which I wish to direct your attention. First, the law of growth is the law of life. And second, the law of life is the law of growth. Let us consider these principles.

All growth depends primarily upon the presence of life. If there be no life, it is needless to say, there will be no growth. Peter addressed the words of our text to the Christians in Asia Minor. How foolish it would have been had he addressed them

to the non-Christians of that or any other part of the world. It would have been no less foolish than for the farmer in the springtime to sow lifeless seed, and then say to it, "Grow." Why do anxious parents peer into the form of their new-born babe? Is it first of all to ascertain the sex or complexion or colour of the eyes? No—it is to see whether there be present the evidence of life. For well do they know that, if there be no life, there will be no future growing child and finally a full-grown man or woman.

This all holds true in the realm of the *soul.* There must be first the Christian life before there can be *growth* in the Christian life. The spirit of Christ must be present before we can grow in that spirit. Just here we strike upon the thorn of scientific contention as to the transmutation of species. For our purposes it need not concern us whether our fathers were monkeys. The fact is that we are not monkeys, but men with all the possibilities and responsibilities of men—however it has come about. Moreover, as Christians, we possess a peculiar seed-life of soul that grows into a fruit called the Spirit of Christ. This cannot be obtained by mere moral development. All the honesty and kindliness in the world toward our neighbour could never develop into the tiniest fruit of the Christ Spirit. All the cultivation in the world, so far as we know, has never lifted a rose to anything but a rose, or a strawberry to anything but a strawberry. The dog

rose may have become an American beauty; the wild strawberry may have become a luscious Wilson grade. But neither has become more than a rose or a strawberry. Some of the world's sublimest moral characters have never even professed any attainment to the Christian life. Rather, have some of them rejected it.

No. Bear in mind you can never grow from Moses to Christ. The gulf must be bridged over with the specific vitalization of Christ. You may become the finest kind of neighbour, or one of the very best characters in the community. But remember you cannot develop either fineness or goodness into Christian grace. They belong to the one soul but possess different forms of life-producing qualities. The one is universal; the other is specific. One is born of the earth, the other of heaven. That is why Jesus declared to Nicodemus, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Not that the two are incompatible, but that they are complementary. The latter is the fulfillment, the complement or completement of the former. The moral life cannot rise to the completement or perfection of the soul. There must be a specific provision made for its higher spiritual vitalization. The fibre of our moral nature is neither vitalized nor organized sufficiently to reproduce itself in the forms of spiritual or soul life. It was for this reason that Jesus said, "Ye must be born from above." Not born

"again." For we are never truly—completely—born, till we are born "from *above*."

We note, further, that Jesus came into the flesh with no other than a "life"-giving purpose. He did not come to found a religion, to establish an empire, to construct a political theory, to formulate a philosophic hypothesis or to disclose a scientific law. He has nothing to say about capital and labour, about International Rights, about economic problems or social questions. No. His purpose is far deeper. He came to smite the rock of man's deepest being, that out of it might flow life-giving streams down into the plains of the world's every-day. Streams that will heal the sores of the human heart. Streams that will solve the ten thousand interhuman problems that have ever vexed the heart of man. Changing the figure, He came to sow the seed from whose kernel will grow the tree whose fruit means the health and strength and joy of all the sons of men who partake of it. Said He, "I have come that ye might have life."

Thus arises our personal question. Do we possess the life of Christ? Job answered this question in the clearest terms when he cried, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." So did Paul, when he declared, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life * * * shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What is *our* answer? Does there dwell in our soul this evening a pervading and unceasing consciousness

that the Spirit of Christ is animating us in our daily walk and conversation? If we are satisfied as to this question, let us turn to the second aspect of our subject,—that the law of life means the law of growth.

Everywhere these Spring days Nature speaks of *growth*. She tells us the story of growth over and over again in a thousand different forms, in bursting bud, in blooming flower and in ripening grain. But more than that we are told these days that Nature is just one vast growing universe; that planets, suns and stars are all in the process of growth. The small become large and the weak become strong, and the simple become the complex. The history of mankind, what is it but the story of the growth of man from his primitive and crude conditions up to the modern and cultivated forms of life? What is it but each branch of life growing in capacity, in strength and in organization along its own line, and all the branches inter-related and inter-functioned into one organic whole? Yes—above her galaxies of systems, the whole universe seems to flash out in emblazoned letters—"Watch us grow." And history is but the revelation of that growth.

So it is no less true of the *soul*. Its history is one of growth or decay. It is the will of God that it grow perpetually. Thus Jesus said, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it *more abundantly*." Here we strike upon the pri-

mary principle that the law of life is the law of growth. Unless life grow, it ceases to be. The new-born infant must grow or die. There is no alternative. For there is nothing static. Everything is becoming. Organized life either develops or decays. There is no "sitting-on-the-fence." Life is a stream, not a pool. And we are on it, going either up or down.

This principle holds true in every branch of life. Nations are constantly becoming either stronger or weaker; they are either rising or falling. The influence of every nation is either growing or waning. Every business concern is ever becoming stronger or weaker. That firm is on the wane that says, "We did a million dollar business last year; if we can do as much this year, we'll be satisfied." The nation that says, "What we have we hold" and aims at no more is also on the wane. Nature ever calls "*more, more* and still *more.*" Her fixed law is one development—whether of stars, animals or men—mind or matter—body or soul. She is never satisfied. And when she goes on into eternity beyond, she will not be satisfied. She will still cry out for *more,* for *growth.* So it is with the soul. So Peter says, "Grow in grace."

The soul is just an aspect of nature—it is not supernatural, for there is nothing supernatural. Or, if you like, in its essence everything is supernatural. The grace of Christ is the completement of nature—the culmination, the perfecting, the ful-

fillment of nature. Jesus came not to destroy anything, but to fulfill everything. And everything must be fulfilled or die. So, the soul that ceases to grow, must die. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Jesus left us no doubt on this point. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." The soul must grow larger, deeper and more active. It cannot remain satisfied with bearing just the same amount of fruit each year. For listen further to Jesus—"And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth *more* fruit." Time and eternity call in clarion tones to every human life to grow more and more and more. For therein is life found and lived out in its essence.

This was the climactic thought of Peter. There is something peculiarly impressive about the last words of every loved one and every great one. The last paragraph of any great book is the culminating truth of the volume. Our text is the climax truth of all Peter had to say to the disciples in Asia Minor—"Grow in grace." Not to go out and found a sect or build a church or reform the world, —No—just to "Grow in grace."

Yes, the soul must grow. As Christians we are in the growing business. We are growing a civilization; we are growing justice, liberty, truth and world democracy. We have outgrown slavery and the saloon, and to-morrow we'll outgrow war, and, the day following, we'll outgrow economic injus-

tice. And then on and on till we have grown the great soul of a world brotherhood and the Kingdom of Christ on earth. All reformations have not been acts but growths. The Reformation headed by Luther, for example, had been growing for centuries. Indeed, salvation itself is not an act but a process—a growth. And so is perdition. Hell is not a place into which we enter—it is a state into which we are growing. So is it true of heaven. It is not a place to which we are going—it is a state into which we are growing. Can we think for a moment that we are saved with the ten thousand imperfections that still encumber our souls? Never. We are justified now—but we shall never be saved till finally we have grown "like Him." We are on the way to salvation—we are growing souls that are *saved*—growing in the "grace of Christ." I am growing my salvation and you are growing yours. That's why the apostle said, "*Work out* your salvation." And, again, "Now is our salvation *nearer* than when we believed."

Observe that we must aim at growth, whether we actually succeed in growing or not. Every nation must aim at a greater national life and strength; every business concern must aim at a larger volume of business and a greater sum of profits. As a matter of fact, of course, in neither case may the enlargement be realized. That is not the point. The point is—what is the attitude of mind and heart? For, after all, it is not success that counts

primarily. It is effort. It is the growing attitude of mind that matters most. Exactly so is it with the soul. It must aim and struggle for a higher degree of Christian attainment than that yet reached, even though it fail to reach its aim. A man may pray ever so well to-day, but he must aim at a more vital prayer to-morrow. If he doesn't, he will not pray so well to-morrow, and his soul will be the weaker. He may have rendered good service to the church and humanity to-day; he must aim to render better to-morrow. The law of growth requires it. If he doesn't, his service next year will fall short of this year, and his soul will be the poorer. Our church did well last year in its contributions to benevolences; but our budget must be bigger and our efforts greater next year, else we shall fall back and our spiritual power will be lessened. Christ gave us two essential key words—"life" and "more." Indeed what is Eternal life but "*life*" ever "*more*"? Science and philosophy tell us the same story of human nature, that in its analysis it is but "*life*" and "more of it." "More," I mean that our lives will hold a greater potency, a clearer vision, a finer sensibility, a higher ideal, a more exalted activity—in brief—a nearer approach day by day to the mind of Christ in which is fulfilled all the verities of the soul.

Thus there rises before us the greatest question of the text—"Are we growing in the grace of Christ? Are we every day rising to a greater

height? Are we realizing a little more clearly to-day than yesterday the beauty of Christ and the Christian life? Is our vision a little clearer? Is our desire a little purer? Is our compassion for others a little deeper? Is our sense of right a little more quickened? Is our love for God and His children stronger?" If not, we are slipping back, and our life is losing its sweetness for ourselves and its influence upon others.

But why ask such questions? For who can answer them? How do I know each day whether I am growing stronger or weaker? I don't know. I cannot know. What then? Several times, while traveling across the continent, I sat a great deal on the rear end of the observation car. I observed this, that often the train had been going gradually up or down a grade for a mile or more before I discerned it. So is it with growing a soul. We may not be able to detect our growth in grace day by day, but every now and then the threshold of consciousness is reached and we become aware that we are going upward or downward. Compare yourself to-day with six month ago. Are you more keenly interested in the things of the soul than you were six months ago? Do you pray more fervently? Do the needs of men move your heart more readily? Does the church of Christ mean more to you? Are you more concerned about the ushering in of God's Kingdom on earth? To your mind do creeds count less and human essentials

more? Are you more ready to forgive? Are you stronger to overcome your besetting sin? Are you a more consistent husband, father, friend, citizen, business man, than you were six months ago? Bear in mind in any event you are *not* just *as* you were half a year ago.

In closing, we ask the vital question—How can I grow in grace? Well, first of all, don't try to grow in grace. Just as useless and foolish would it be for a mother to say to her infant child—"Try and grow, my dear." No—the Lord has placed us in a world of growth according to the laws of life. What does the wise mother do? She places her child in the proper atmosphere, nourishes it and gives it rest. The gardener cultivates the soil, plants his seed, tends it, and leaves the rest to kind Heaven. So is it in growing a soul. "Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God alone giveth the increase." God grows the soul, man only nourishes and tends it. Cultivate the soul with proper thought matter and chaste desires. Breathe the atmosphere of prayer and scriptural meditation. Linger on Nature's highest handiwork and the soul's deepest intuitions. "Whatsoever things are * * * of good report, think on these things." Fill your cup of kindness to-day, and to-morrow it will take a pitcher to hold it. Lisp your gratitude to God to-day and to-morrow it will become a song of praise. Cultivate the seed of chastity in your heart to-day and to-morrow it will be

in your bosom the fragrant blossom of purity. Plant to-day the little shoots of faith, nourish it every day, and not long hence there will grow up in your soul the sturdy oak of trust that not all the storms of life can move.

But more, you must become vitally grafted into the source of all spiritual life and growth—the Vine of all human souls. Listen to His pregnant message: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for severed from me, ye can do nothing." He alone is the Fountain and Channel of all grace. Wrapt up in His grace is the crowning perfectness of every human soul.

Remember it is just by our little daily attention to the soul that we really grow. Therefore every day close in a little nearer to Christ. Grip His hand a little tighter. Talk with Him a little more intimately. Get under His yoke a little closer. Walk with Him in little warmer friendship. Breathe His spirit a little more deeply. Love Him a little more ardently. Catch His vision a little more clearly. Doubt Him a little less, and serve Him a little more. Don't wonder about Him; just grow like Him. Don't criticise His gospel; just assimilate it. Don't build up theories about Him; just grow into His likeness. In brief, grow a Christ heart. Grow a Christ love. Grow a Christ temperament. Grow a Christ forgiveness. Grow a Christ faith; in short, a Christ *mind*. As the great

apostle put it, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Then be this our prayer, that every passing day we may so direct all our thoughts, and words and deeds that we shall grow in the character of Jesus. What a conception of life—great and grand—growing every day into the exact likeness of Christ and into the very image of God! Every day a new day of onward, upward reach. Every day the vision of the eternal a little clearer: God and Heaven a little nearer, and the Master of men a little dearer.

"E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

III

SEEING JESUS

"Sir, we would see Jesus."—JOHN 12:21.

A VOICE had come from heaven. What was it? It was the voice of the Father of all mankind. Why did He speak? It was in answer to the call of Jesus. And why did Jesus thus call? It was in answer to the call of certain Greeks to see Jesus. When men inquire to see Jesus, Heaven is not far away; they are not far from the Kingdom of God. And, so, these Greeks who came saying to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus," were not far from Jesus Himself.

GREEKS CULTURED FOLKS

Who were these Greeks? They were the world's cultured folk. All nations came to learn their wisdom. At their feet sat the intellectual leaders of Rome and Carthage and the other great centers of the earth. To this cultured class belonged Homer, their classic poet; Plato, their first philosopher Demosthenes, their renowned orator; Solon, their premier statesman, and Phidias, their famous sculptor. From this select company, of the world's great lights, came these Greeks to "see Jesus."

Culture Cannot Satisfy

Culture could not satisfy these men. It has never satisfied the world. We all admire the beautiful, but there is something we crave beyond the beautiful. We love the lovely, but we thirst after something greater than the lovely. We drink from the deep well. We seek after wealth. But when we have found it, we are still unsatisfied. We strive for position. And when we have secured it, there is still a "void within the soul." Yes, there is something in the unfathomed depth and height and in the unmeasured breadth of the human soul that culture can never reach. So these Greeks with all their learning and wisdom were dissatisfied. And they came to see the Light of all the Ages. And they said, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

More and more, ever since, the world has followed these Greeks in their quest to see Jesus. Less than two generations ago, edicts were posted everywhere in Japan, declaring death to all who accepted Christianity or declared their allegiance to Jesus. Soon afterward, when the hermit empire was waking to its place in civilization, the government sent out an embassage to find the secret of Christian civilization. Her envoys, after diligent investigation, returned. They reported that the secret of the growth and strength of western nations was not in their forms of government, nor in their methods of business, nor in their laws or institutions, nor in their schools or churches, but

in their Jesus. Forthwith, the doors of Japan were opened to the Christian religion, the edicts were withdrawn, and the Japanese have ever since been following these Greeks in their quest to "see Jesus." To-day four of their ministers of government have seen Jesus and are daily walking with Him.

In the Boxer days no Englishman could speak with higher authority on China than Sir Robert Hart. He declared at that time that no political move could save China, not even the much talked of partitioning, but that in his opinion only the religion of Jesus could save that ancient people. Some time ago John R. Mott, the well-known International Y. M. C. A. Secretary, asked the President of China for an interview. He received word fifteen minutes would be granted. Mr. Mott laid before him the claims of Jesus and His Religion upon China. When the fifteen minutes were up, Mr. Mott arose to leave. But the President begged him to remain. He remained thirty minutes longer. And when he arose to go, the ruler of 400,000,000 people said, "I want to see this Jesus, for He does what Confucius and every other Chinese religious leader cannot do; He can give power to carry out what He teaches. China wants Him. You must bring Him to every village as well as to every city in China."

The world's interest is centering around the Far East. Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Fosdick have just

returned from there. They both tell us the Far East is calling to "see Jesus." The ancient religions are losing their hold, and the masses are calling for the One who fills and satisfies the human soul. One of our missionaries in India tells us he can scarcely get the natives to leave the Services. "They are literally hungering for Him who said, 'I am the Bread of Life.'" Why? It is the deep calling to the deep in every human breast.

Poor Russia! Broken Russia! Yes! But she will return. She is already beginning to return. Lenine recently declared that he had made a mistake in trying to rule Russia without religion. Mr. Balfour, leading English statesman at the Armament Conference, said a few days ago that the hope of the civilized world is not in her science or her navies, but in the religion of Jesus. Roger W. Babson, the foremost American statistician and commercial writer, says, "The religion which we talk about for an hour a week, on Sunday, is not only the vital force which protects our community, but it is the vital force which makes our communities." Yes, the world is on the heels of these Greeks, whether it knows it or not. Dissatisfied with all else, it is saying in a thousand ways, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

World Must See Jesus

The world must see Jesus. It must actually *see* Him. Mere hearing of Him and believing about

Him and talking about Him will not do. These Greeks had heard of Him, but that did not satisfy them. They wanted to *see* Him. Seeing is the most important sense. Scientists tell us that the optic nerve is the strongest nerve in the body. It bears the impact of light reflected from all the world of sense. Its duty is so great, its strength is so taxed, that the Provident Maker has made an eyelid to shade it for an instant every few seconds during the day. And He makes us draw this shade for seven or eight hours every night to give it rest. Four-fifths of all the sense-work is done by the eye. Four-fifths of all sense knowledge comes through the avenue of sight.

Hearing about Jesus, we have said, is not sufficient. When will the world learn this important fact? For centuries it has heard and believed about Him, but how few have seen Him. Many have entered the Church to worship. Many have united with His Church. They have named His blessed name. But, O, how many have not yet beheld Him! They have followed Him, yes, they have touched Him. But their eyes have not yet seen Him.

It was ever so. There was *Peter*. He followed Jesus many a day. But he did not *see* Jesus till that moment when it burst upon his vision that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. What a vision! It became the Rock on which the Master declared He would build His church.

Once more there was the instance of *Philip*. All those months Philip had journeyed with Jesus. He had heard Him preach to the multitudes. He had seen Him give light to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He had seen Him cleanse the leper and restore the demoniac. He had seen Him feed the multitude and raise the dead. Yes. Yet the Saviour turned to him one day and said: "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

And finally there was *Judas*. For two and a half years he walked in the company of Jesus. He was a trusted disciple. He often looked into the Saviour's face. He often ate and drank with the Master. He even sat at the Lord's table in the upper room. But he never caught a glimpse of Jesus. If he had, he never would have sold Him to His enemies.

What the world is missing when it hears about Jesus, but sees Him not. How much greater would be the joy and the power of the Christian Church, if all her members beheld every day the saving glory and beauty of its blessed Lord and King.

To See Jesus Is to Be Drawn to Him

Everywhere men, whether they know it or not, are in quest of Jesus. And when they find Him, they will discover God's New World that lies hidden in every soul. Some time ago William A. Sunday, the famous evangelist, was conducting a

campaign in a western town. One of the interested laymen of the city invited his friend Gibbons to attend the meetings. But Gibbons said "No, I have never heard him, and I don't want to hear him." Nevertheless, he gave in and went. The campaign had been on about a week and Mr. Sunday had settled down to real business. The next day Gibbons' friend asked him how he liked the evangelist. Quick as a flash came the reply—"I liked him so well that I am going to hear him again to-night." "Tell me," rejoined his friend, "what you liked about him." Then came the answer that tells the secret of "Billy" Sunday's power. "For thirty years I have heard about Jesus, but he was the first man that ever made me *see* Jesus." And so he wanted to go again. And so does the world want to go where it can see Jesus. For a voice calls from the deep of every soul, "Sir, we would see Jesus." That is why Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." In other words, "When the world *sees* me the Redeeming Saviour, all men will be transformed into my likeness."

And so has it been all down the ages. The world has always surrendered its will and bowed its heart to the Jesus it has seen. But only to Him whom its spiritual eyes have beheld. In a metropolitan art gallery, as I entered, there sat a man gazing at a painting. Returning three hours later he was still gazing upon that painting. Why? Why so totally absorbed? It was a master portrait of the

Redeemer's face. At the Louvre in Paris I saw the multitudes pass by Rubens' "Virgin," his "Awakening of Lazarus," his "Triumph of Religion," and stop to linger upon his "Face of Christ." Why? The answer is in the quest of the ancient Greeks, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

Is the Church Unveiling Jesus?

A few years ago a prominent minister in Boston complained bitterly from his pulpit that so few attended the Church services. He wished to know the reason. He could see none. "I have preached," he declared, "as forcefully as I ever did, I have proclaimed the latest Theology, the most modern Philosophy, and the latest theories of Science. What is the matter?" A few minutes later, as the ushers deposited the Offering, one of them handed the minister a note that was given him a moment before. The clergyman opened it and it contained this age-long question of the cultured Greeks, "Sir, we would see Jesus." It was a sharp rebuke. But it was the cry of a hungering world to feast its eye upon the glory and the beauty of the King of all mankind. The preacher learned the lesson and his former power returned with his returning vision of Jesus. This is still the call of the human soul. Yes, when the soul once sees Jesus, it is conquered. It surrenders. It gives up all and follows him. Its mind has rest and its heart is cleansed.

So do I ask myself, what is my big business in life? Is it to build up a great Church? To effect a big organization? To draw a Church full of people? No. Is it to preach about Jesus? His doctrines, His miracles, His death, or His resurrection? No. All these are but auxiliaries. My one big task is to show Jesus, to help men to see Him. If I succeed in this, my life work, my life reward has been realized. If I fail in this, all else will not atone.

Let us be honest then, and examine ourselves as a Church. Mr. Smith enters our Church to attend our ordinary Sunday Service. What does he see? A full Church? Yes. A fine large Choir? Yes. A Sociable congregation? Yes. And what else? Is that all? The benediction is pronounced—he leaves the Church. He is once more travelling his path of life. Let us be candid—he saw much that he admired and enjoyed. Yes, but did he see *Jesus?* His soul came to see the Master, he thirsted for a glimpse of Him, whether he knew it or not. Did he see Him? Did he catch the outline of the Father looking down over His children, numbering the hairs of their heads and forgiving every last sin they ever committed? Did he catch a flash of God stooping down over this sin-cleft, sorrow-riven, struggling old world and lifting it upward through the midnight dark of war and stress and strain? Did he catch a glimpse of His grey dawn of victory, as it breaks over the waking heads

of the restless sons of men? Did he see God watching across the weary wastes of time for the homecoming sons of earth? Did he see His outstretched arms bearing humanity along the upward way of final triumph? Did he see God, the Sovereign Ruler and the Loving Father of all mankind? In short, did God become flesh for the moment and dwell among men? Then he saw Jesus. For, said the Master, "He that hath seen *me,* hath seen the Father." And likewise, he that hath seen the Father, hath seen *Jesus.* Hence, He declared, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me." Did that stranger see Jesus that Sunday in Central Church?

Our Personal Influence

And what about our *personal influence?* As Parents? Our children see us through and through. But, in so doing, do they see Jesus? Or do they see only his garments or his shadow? Do they behold in us the strong, gentle, loving, pure Christ-like spirit? In the Church what does the world see? Just Church members, Officers, Committees, Organizations? Or do they discern in us the very body of Christ, for such we are supposed to be. A little girl said to her mother, "I like my Sunday-school teacher because she makes me see Jesus." What a compliment! Think, dear Sunday-school teacher, of your high calling. And, O, be sure you are striving to reach the goal that teacher won! For nothing short of that will do.

And Church members what of our *daily lives?* When non-professing and unchurched people are in our presence, is their worldliness rebuked? Are they stimulated to a higher life? Many of them do not pray. Do we stimulate them to pray? Many of them do not attend Church. Is there an urge from our lives leading them to attend? Does our faith bestir them to a larger faith? They see our daily life, our disposition, our temperament, our ideals, our methods, our dealings. Do they detect through these the features of the Master? Do they catch from our presence the tang of the Lord's presence? They may or may not be conscious of it. It matters little. The great question is, when the world sees us, does it discern *Jesus?* If it does, we stand on holy ground, and angels might well envy our place in the Universe. Sometime ago a minister's telephone rang as he was retiring for the night. A voice rang out—"Is that Dr. Gibson?" "Yes," was the reply. "Alright," rejoined the speaker at the other end of the line, "this is Coleman, I'll see you later." A few months afterward, Dr. Gibson asked Mr. Coleman why on earth he rang off so soon. Coleman answered significantly, "My object was gained, and I was in a hurry. When I called you, I was undergoing the most terrific temptation of my life—a business deal. My future seemed to lie in the balance between right and wrong. I prayed for help, a voice replied 'call up Gibson.' I did. As soon as I heard your voice,

it was all over. I felt I was safe. So I hurried back and decided for the right." Think of it, my dear friends, some one prays for help, and a voice from heaven says, "Call up Jones in Central Church." What a priesthood is human life when the Lord of all the earth can be seen, heard and touched through us.

Through the witness of His Church, and by the Redeeming love of God the whole earth shall finally *see* Jesus. For we read, "And every eye shall *see* Him." Every eye in America, in Europe, in Asia, and in all the world. But more, "And they that pierced Him" shall see Him. Pilate, Judas, the murderous Pharisees and the Roman soldiers. Every man that died a stranger to Him. Voltaire and Ingersoll and every sceptic that ever doubted Him. Every friend and foe, Christian and pagan. What a sight! "Every eye shall see him, and they that pierced Him." And then "before Him every knee shall bow." Then shall the world be one great family. And "men shall brothers be." And God will be their common Father. When? When "every eye shall *see* Him."

Like Him

Seeing Jesus is more than a mere exercise of mental vision. It is a condition of the soul. I can see anything in the world as I am like it. As a father I see as you do, because you are a father. For, as a father, I resemble you. So, we'll one

day see Jesus because we'll be like Him. "It doth not appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall be manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall *see* Him as He is." What it will be to see Jesus is beyond our power to understand. It passes our imagination. John says: "When I saw Him, I fell at his feet as one dead." It was too much for his soul still in the flesh to comprehend or endure.

Chiefly Through the Church

The world is to see Jesus chiefly through His Church. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are my witnesses." "Go work in my vineyard." "Go ye into all the world." So spoke none other than the One whom the Greeks came to see and whom the world thirsts to see. Yes. That's why these cultured men of Greece sought Jesus, not through the Scribes, not the Pharisees nor the Publicans, nor the Roman Governor, but through His followers, Philip and Andrew and the other disciples. So it is to this day. Men have long since tired of trying to see Jesus through Science, and Philosophy and Art, and Theology itself. They are coming, as these Greeks did, to the Church, to those who are called in His name, His Christian disciples. And to these the Master says, "Let your light so shine."

So I ask the question, why are we enlarging our Church building? Why are we perfecting our or-

ganization? Is it that we may have a bigger and finer equipment? Is it to draw larger crowds, create a greater interest in our Church? No. The reason is vastly deeper. That, with a better equipment, the rattle of machinery may be silenced, the forms of organization hidden, and that more and more our community, our city, or country and the world through Central Church may *see* Jesus. So be this our prayer, that, as a Church and as members, we may be Christ's reflecting mirror, setting forth His beauty before the sons of men.

Then will you join with me as we sing anew this hymn of reconsecration.

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine:
Now hear me while I Pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine."

IV

THE SOUL'S DIMENSIONS

"The length, and the breadth and the height of it are equal."—REVELATION 21:16.

THIS is the classic chapter on Heaven. Its main theme is the New City of God coming down from God out of heaven. A significant statement about this new dwelling-place of the Lord is found in our text,—that the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. We have long since regarded the New City as a state of soul rather than a dwelling-place. The text, therefore, suggests to us the dimensions of the Redeemed soul.

First of all then there is its *length.* Length at once suggests a *"line."* Every soul has its linear measure. How far does it reach? The particular phase of the length that suggests itself to us is the *"line"* that occupies our talents as a life work. We ask a man what *"line"* he follows. That is to say, "what is your *business,* your profession, or your trade?" Whatever it is, one thing is sure; we should see to it that its length is equal to the breadth and the height.

In other words we should "follow our own line."

The Lord never intended us all to be farmers, or merchants, or physicians, or mechanics. But He has always intended that we should follow each his line and make the most of it. So make the most of your line. Put your soul into it. Make the biggest success of it you possibly can. Do the biggest and best volume of business you can. Get up early and be on time. Be punctual and despatchful in all you do. Do your business on business principles. Magnify the importance of your "line." Make it reach out more and more till it touches every home and individual in the community, if possible. Make your "line" as profitable as you reasonably can. Don't stop with selling twenty thousand dollars' worth of business a year; sell thirty or fifty thousand dollars' worth, if you can. And don't stop with two thousand dollars' worth of profit a year; make three or five or ten thousand dollars' worth, if you honestly can. Therefore, plan largely, advertise, increase your service, and your capacity and your methods. Stick to your own line, and make the most of it. A man a few weeks ago offered me double my present income, but my answer was, "That is not my 'line,'" and there it had to end.

But why this advice? Because, if you follow it, you will be all the better Christian. Your soul has a length dimension that needs taking care of as well as its breadth and height dimensions. If you are content to stay just where you are in your business,

so will you likely be content to stay just where you are in Church and religious matters. And that would mean retrenchment. Your soul is made up of what you do on Monday just as vitally as what you do on Sunday. Therefore, follow your "line" thoroughly. Jesus made carpentry a sacrament. He did the best possible workmanship. He turned out the finest and strongest kind of article. Not a piece left His hand half or under done. His public ministry never would have been such a success, if He hadn't. Peter, James and John never would have made the apostles they were, had they not been the kind of fishermen they were. Paul would never have become the conquering Church founder he was, had he not been the kind of tent-maker he was. Therefore, let me urge you to go to your several "lines" of duty to-morrow morning with the same sense of Christian duty with which you came to this service to-day. For, remember, that down at the bottom the duties of your "line" whether in office, workshop, home or school are just as sacred as those of prayer and praise.

There is also the "line" of *Thought*. We ask a person, "What is your line of thought?" It may be science. Then hie off to the woods and fields, and study the beauty and glory of God's handiwork in nature. Or, perhaps, your "line" is Literature. Then browse among the hill-tops of the best literary productions of the ages. Follow your favourite poets and meditate upon your favourite themes.

So on, all through the realm of history, art, music and all the other several branches of learning. The same is true of amusements. Here, too, we have our peculiar "lines." If your line is golf, play golf the very best you can. If baseball, get out of it all you can. And so on all along the way—follow your "line" of amusement and recreation so long as it serves to lengthen the dimension of your soul. Many souls are shrivelled from lack of these linear qualities, just because "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Therefore, follow your "line" and make the most of yourself in this world's affairs. Ninety per cent of the people at sixty-five years of age are dependent upon their friends or the State. And the same percentage never rise to the place God intended them to take. Why? Because they failed to develop the length dimension of their souls. There are "diversities of operations." Follow yours the best you know how.

Now let us consider the *breadth* of the soul. The length is alright so far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. Because length without breadth means failure. Mathematicians tell us the axiom that a line is length without breadth. Theoretically this is workable; but logically it is impossible. For how is it possible for an object to have length without breadth? Length is really possible because there is breadth. Look at this pencil I hold in my hand, I place it on the pulpit. As soon as I let

go, it falls. Why? Because it lacks sufficient breadth.

Apply this to the soul, and we find it means that length without breadth is selfishness. It is like a bird trying to fly with one wing, or a man trying to walk with one leg. So a soul trying to get along with only its own line at the best can only limp its way through life. In short, mere length spells "me," while breadth spells "*others.*" See how this has worked out in the lives of men. Take Cain. He had a great line. He was a successful farmer. But he had no place for his brother. He had no breadth. And the result was, he displeased God and slew his brother. And that is just what breadthless souls have been doing all down the ages. On the other hand there was Joseph. He developed himself till he rose next to the king; he became the first man of the land. He surely pushed his line to its limit. He was a soul with a genuine length. But he also had a place for others. In the hour of famine he was prepared to provide food for the multitudes. His great concern was about his father's household. Thus his breadth honoured God and helped his brothers. And moreover his breadth was equal to his length. Coming to the New Testament, there was Dives. He became very rich. His length was great. But he did not see Lazarus starving at his very door. He died without breadth of soul, and he went straight to perdition. Once more, take the parable of the good Samaritan. The

Priest and the Levite were most successful in their line. They doubtless were reputed for their ability and diligence in looking after their "line." They may indeed have been ecclesiastical experts, "known and read among men." But they had not breadth enough to walk across the road to help another soul in pain. The Samaritan, no less successful in his line, was broad enough to be "moved with compassion" the instant his eye caught the situation. His breadth of soul made him forget for the time its length. So he crossed the road, poured in his oil, bound up the wounds, took care of his brother to the utmost of his power. What did Jesus say about this? He told us to cultivate that kind of a soul. All this was about the second commandment of Jesus, "Love your neighbour *as yourself.*" Breadth of the soul should be equal to its length.

How does this work out in your daily life? It means that while you are pushing your line as far as you can, do not forget the other fellow's line. Here is the rub. Here is where we fall short. It is easy to make money. But it is not so easy to let our neighbours make it without any obstruction on our part. The commercial and industrial world has made far strides in its length. What inventions! What productions! What systems! The modern age stands amazed at the progress it has made. But it has been chiefly a linear progress. It has had altogether too little breadth to it. Standing on this platform a few months ago, a dis-

tinguished labor secretary made the statement that after the war was over, a greater war would begin. In short, his explanation was that it would be a struggle whose object would be the broadening of all the lines of capital and labour. The employer will have to broaden out towards the welfare of his employee and likewise the employee towards the interests of his employer. It is just this narrowness among the nations of the earth that has set the world ablaze with war. No nation possessed the length of Germany in scientific and literary attainment. Her line surely went out "to the ends of the earth." The nations of the earth sat at her feet to learn her wisdom. But no nation ever lived so abjectly void of breadth. In advancing her own interests, she paid little attention to the interests of other peoples. Small nations did not count, and treaties meant nothing when they stood in the way of her advancement. Thus for lack of breadth she plunged civilization into the bloodiest war it has ever known, and, in so doing, all but lost her own life.

The same is true of religion. The Christian Church truly has been busy down the centuries extending her "line." But what a history of narrowness. A historian estimates that no less than fifty millions have suffered martyrdom since the breadthless Pharisees crucified the Redeemer. And why? An eye half open can see the answer. For centuries the Church claimed for herself entire au-

thority in moral and spiritual things. Individual reason or conscience did not count. And then, after the Reformation, when denominationalism arose, what narrowness filled the air. But, thank God, this is passing away. One of the surest and biggest blessings now before us is the broadening of the Church's soul. The Church already is approaching her breadth. Small communities all over the land have already come to their breadth and have united their denominations for one common worship and service. This was the mind of the Master. Hear him pray for the breadth of his disciples— "that they may be one." And hear his last behest for breadth— "go ye out into all the world." His breadth was as great as his length. And he says, "Follow me." Let your Christian lives be so broad that they will "shine before men" everywhere, in home, office, and workshop. Have a place in your soul for the needs and the creeds of others. And let your breadth grow on and on till it equal your length. Remember that wealth is length, but charity is breadth; that ability is length, but love is breadth; that talent is length, but service is breadth.

And now for the *height.* Without height, of course, everything would be flat. This is the dimension without which the physical world could not exist. Without it neither can the soul world exist. This third dimension means the soul's upwardness toward God. Daniel had it, when daily he opened

the windows three times toward Jerusalem. The psalmist possessed it when he sang:

> "I to the hills will lift mine eyes
> From whence doth come my help."

Job had it when he declared—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." John had it, when he wrote—"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Paul possessed it, when he called the Church of Ephesus—"unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Gaze at the height to which Jesus attained, when, from his eminence, he called us to love God with all our hearts. And note also not only the height of his ideal, but the height of his character—"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He was "tempted in all points * * * yet without sin."

Not long ago, standing on Broadway, New York, watching men digging a foundation thirty feet below the surface, I asked, "Why are you digging so deep?" "Because we are going to build so high," was the reply. They dug till they struck the rock. The ground was scarce, but the space overhead was unlimited. My friends, I have not much space on earth on which to build up my soul's third dimension, but I own all the space between my soul and heaven. If we would build high, we must dig deep. Our foundation must be none other than the Rock of Ages that endureth forever. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Nature

seems to lay its premium upon this third dimension. See the tree, the grain, the flower and the grass all lift their heads upward toward their Maker. The natural direction of the soul is also Godward. If we turn not heavenward, it is only because we are unnatural. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," cried the Psalmist. Of course, it does. Give it half a chance and it will "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Then dig deep, for you are building high. Dig till you rest upon the Rock of Ages, for you are building for eternity. Remember you may reach the ends of the earth by your length and breadth, but you can never reach the Kingdom of God without your height. Your character, with its length and breadth, may stand the scrutiny of men for a time, but without height it cannot stand the eye of heaven for an instant. Character must be high enough to talk to God in prayer and to trust Him where it cannot prove Him. It must have altitude enough to commune with Him. It must have height enough to obey His behests and listen to His still small voice in the realm of conscience.

Let me then measure your height this morning. Please stand with your back to the wall of God's Word. Your soul's experience is your height. You have been prosperous. I want to measure your soul. How high does it reach? Please don't stand on your toes. Does your soul with its money touch God? Does it thank Him every day for its pros-

perity, for its health and its happiness? Is it consecrating its property to the glory of the Giver? Jesus saw that wealthy souls were so often not rich souls. They were paupers in height—souls with too often only two dimensions. And thus it was hard for them to enter the Kingdom. And yet it is all unnecessary—for riches used for the glory of Heaven grow high souls of the sublimest type. Listen to Jesus: "All mine are thine." How far up do you reach? "All mine are thine." How much of your possessions can you from your heart of hearts say is His?

Or it may be you have never been favoured with much of this world's goods. Yours has been more or less a struggle all the way to "get along." Yet what heights may be yours. Your back to the wall, please. Listen: "Having nothing, yet possessing all things." "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"—yet He "hath not where to lay his head." What heights! How high did you reach? Having little, do you still possess the riches of soul? Are you wealthy in your faith, in your hope and in your love? Can you lift up your heart and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name"? Can you look out above your meagre gifts of earth and sing the refrain of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"? Can you still chant in the deep of your heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"? Can you find sweet melody in the song

of the apostle—"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, * * * shall be able to separate us from the love of God"? Can you follow him all the way up the steep ascent of Christian life and say with him, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"? How high do you reach amid your material needs and shortcomings?

Or perhaps adversity has come to you. Your day of prosperity has been eclipsed by the night of sorrow or trial. Put your back to the Book of Books again, if you please. Let me gently ask you to measure the height of your bereaved and burdened soul. Do you still trust God? Are you still loyal to Him? Or have you closed His word and stopped praying and given yourself over to doubts? Or, do you trust and love God more than ever? Stand beside Job for a moment. Stripped of his possessions, his family and his health, Job had nothing left but his soul. But look up high till you see the snow-capped peak of his mountain soul. Hear his prayer echoing down over the Ages, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." What is *your* measure? Or, look at our great Example. When His soul was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death," hear Him from His dizzy height breathing His calm submission, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." And then behold Him take up the cross and bear it on to death and finally to His kingly crown. Sorrowing soul, what now is your measure?

I do not mean that you should have no sorrow or tears. O, no. That is as natural as the cloud and the night. But is your sorrow softened and are your tears sweetened by the deep inner peace from above that passeth all understanding? Are you able amid your sorrow and your tears to say, "Not my will but Thine be done"?

Now let me measure your *character*. Here is the wall: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Then, if you please, back up against the mind of Jesus. In your home. You know about how Jesus would act were He in your place in your home. As husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter—be candid now—how do you measure up beside the Master of Men? In your business—how tall are you? Measured beside your neighbour, I am sure you would not need to look up. But we are not measuring by our neighbour. We have just one standard. Will you let Jesus be your auditor? What will He write under your business records? I see you stand behind your counter, in your office and in your workshop, and I know the height of your body. But far more important, tell me as you stand there, what is the height of your soul? Your private life. Ah—here is the rub. It is known to just yourself and God. It makes little difference that the world does not know it. But your eternity depends upon what only you and God know. Be assured of this, however, that the world will sooner or later mea-

sure your inner soul. It will sooner or later sense your height. If your inner private life has no height, the multitudes will soon detect it in your eye, your daily talk and walk.

The height is the soul's biggest asset. It was the dimension that Christ most emphasized. He came to renew it, to give it new life "from above." He came to lift it up, till it reached the Kingdom of Heaven. He came to refashion and develop it, till it reached the height of his own stature. It is the height of the soul that gives content to its length and breadth. For a soul without height is shallow and meaningless. However extended civilization may be, without the Godward height of its soul, it is forever shallow and unstable. It is thus not wealth nor learning we want so much as height of soul. Our country's greatness is not our vast resources of field and lake and forest. No. It is the altitude of our National soul. The strongest force behind the United States is not our money, nor our guns, nor our material resource. No, it is the soul of a united citizenship who, trusting God, have set their faces upward and onward till they establish the flag of Christian Democracy upon the mountain top of world peace forever. It is, therefore, this upward dimension of the soul that I lay specially upon your hearts.

Finally, so live that your growth of soul will be threefold. Let it be balanced with the equipoise of length and breadth and height. Then will your

lives possess the sweet harmony and the ordered beauty, the rich content and the splendid strength which the Saviour came to impart. The three are essential. To neglect one is to neglect the three. So, let us ever pray:

"Give me a heart like Thine
By Thy wonderful power,
By Thy grace every hour,
Give me a heart like Thine."

V

OUR SECRET FAULTS

"Cleanse Thou me from secret faults"—PSALM 19, 23.

FIRST *of all, what does the Psalmist mean by "Secret faults"?* We have faults known to ourselves, but which are unknown to the world. The dear ones in our home know all about them. But the people down in the store, the shop, the school and on the street haven't the least suspicion that we possess such faults. They would be surprised if anyone should hint such a thing. They say to each other, "What an even-tempered man Mr. Jones is." All the while Mrs. Jones would give them a surprise. His faults are hidden.

Then we have faults which we know ourselves and which the outside also knows. But *our loved ones at home know nothing of them.* Men down-town speak of us with a tone of disrespect. Why? They know our tendency to crookedness, or, perhaps, unchastity. And, all the while, our family are blissfully ignorant and unsuspecting. Finally, one day, as a thunderbolt from a clear blue sky, the secret is out and the home is shocked beyond expression.

But it is not these secret faults the psalmist means. They are the faults of which he himself is unconscious. They are faults which others may or may not see, but which God always beholds. We see them in *others.* There is not a man we know quite well but has them. He is perhaps selfish, or rude, or unforgiving, or complaining, or cynical, or crooked, and yet he himself does not suspect it. Even in your *home* you can see faults in your dear ones; every one of them, of which they are entirely oblivious. You see faults in your neighbours they never dream they possess. Perhaps, they are just peculiar, or they don't attend church, or they talk too loud, or they keep a cross dog, or indulge in over-late hours, or neglect their children. But they are totally ignorant of any one of these faults. Well, if you can see faults in your neighbours and your family which they cannot see themselves, surely it is more than likely *you* have faults which you cannot see, but which others very readily see. And, above all, surely God, who made you, can see flaws which no man, not even you yourself, can see.

Our very nature tells the story. Does not the Psalmist say that we are "born and shapen in iniquity"? And does not the Prophet Isaiah declare that "all we like sheep have gone astray"? Psychology says the subconscious mind contains vastly more of human life than does the conscious mind. It is like the iceberg; much more is sub-

merged than appears above the surface. When crossing the Atlantic, the captain of our ship pointed out to us the place where the *Titanic* went down. He showed us how far the visible part of the iceberg was from the invisible portion which the great liner struck. Soon one of these gigantic fields of ice loomed in the distance. On being asked why he kept so far from it, the captain answered, "because there is usually a greater field below the surface, which no eye can see." Yes, there is a vast deal more of *good* in all of us than even we ourselves have ever dreamed existed there. And there is also vastly more *evil* in the best of us than we ever thought was there. Shakespeare says of man, "How like a God!" and the Psalmist declares he is "a little lower than God." True, but Scripture avows on the other hand that the "heart is deceitful and above all things desperately wicked." Paul is recognized as the Church's greatest Apostle. Yet he spoke of himself as the Chief of sinners. Why? Doubtless because he saw deeper into his soul than most of us do.

We often surprise ourselves. Every now and then we are surprised at some foolish, or evil thing we think, or say, or do. We find ourselves unexpectedly giving way to some doubt or temptation which we thought ourselves above. Why? Some secret fault is there, and we know it not.

What is the trouble? We don't know ourselves. If we knew the weak spots on the house where the

burglar might easily enter, we would at once fortify it. So, if we knew every weak place in our souls, we would strengthen it. It was for this reason that Socrates proclaimed to the world his dictum, "Know thyself."

The next difficulty is that *we love ourselves too much.* And you know love is blind. How sensitive we are to a compliment paid us. We roll it under our tongue as a sweet morsel. It never occurs to us that possibly it is not true. You have said many kind things to me about my Sermons. And I always think you are the most truthful people on earth. It never comes to my mind that I am really unworthy of such eulogies. On the other hand, how sensitive we are to criticism. One evening Mr. and Mrs. White dropped into your home. In a little while one of them remarked, "Did you hear the latest?" "Why, no; what is it?" "Well, you must keep it quiet." "O, surely! Don't be afraid, just—go ahead!" A most interesting neighbourhood seance then takes place. The next evening Mr. and Mrs. Black called. They are somewhat restless. Finally, Mr. Black comes to the point and tells you he has heard some rumours about you. Soon you are the angriest man in town. Just to think that anyone could say or even think such a thing about you. The point is, you were ready to believe the gossip about your neighbour, but resented anyone thinking such a thing about you. Why? You had so much higher estimate of

your own character than you had of your neighbour's. Your own fault was hidden from you, but not your neighbour's.

Self-pride sometimes hides our faults from us. There were the Pharisees. They thanked God they were not as other men, extortioners, etc. All the while they were totally blind to worse sins than these in themselves. Jesus saw it and called them "hypocrites" and "vipers." If they had seen their secret faults, they never would have rejected Jesus. Take it into our *homes.* Your wife says to you, "Dear, you are so vindictive; you are always on the alert to defend yourself in such petty things." And you are at once offended. You at once rise to defend yourself. You have been wronged. You are not vindictive; you are positively sure of that. What's the matter? Your self-pride has blinded you to your secret fault. We go home from Church, and we begin to criticize something someone did, and we are absolutely blind to the fact that that very person could pick a dozen holes in us, and, all the while, we are blissfully ignorant of one of them. All just because we have too much self-pride to think we are guilty of such things. The other day a couple came to my study to see whether I could help them to adjust their home differences. I soon saw they were both to blame, that each could see the other's faults, but not each his own. It was only when I succeeded in getting each to see his "secret faults" that an

agreement was finally reached. No wonder the Scottish bard sang:

> "Would some power the giftie gie us,
> To see ourselves as others see us."

And no wonder the Psalmist prayed,

> "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

Then, again, *habit often hides our faults from us.* I am told that the residents at Niagara Falls practically do not hear the Falls any more. When a student in Toronto, I lived at Knox College. Those of you who know that city remember that the street cars pass around the old college on either side. When I first returned each autumn, I was disturbed at nights by the screeching sound of the cars. But, not long after, I awoke one night from a sound sleep. What had happened? The cars had stopped running. You remember that act which disturbed you when first you did it? It is now a habit, and now not a twinge of disturbance. It has become a secret fault. You are no longer aware of the fault. The "fault-ness" is gone. You neglected one night to pray. And it bothered you a little. The next time it bothered you less. Now, you don't pray at all. And you are not disturbed about it. As a fault it has disappeared, hidden under the prayerless habit. You remember how regularly you used to attend Church. One day, you didn't come. The next Sunday, company came, and you stayed away again. And you were

sorry you missed the Services. Yes, but you kept on staying away, and finally you got the "stay-away" habit. And now it seldom costs you a thought. Why? Under the mantle of your habit your fault has become hidden from your very self. And most of our secret faults have become thus hidden from our view.

Custom is another hiding-place for our secret faults. What everybody does we accept as right. We go with the multitude. When the crowd does anything, there is no one to find fault. And so the fault is hidden. You remember how the throng cried, "Crucify Him!" and Jesus was forthwith crucified. Nor was there a sense of injustice or wrong done. A few centuries ago thousands of witches were put to death without the slightest justification. Yet no one was conscious of any injustice done, for it was the custom to burn witches.

In the days preceding the Civil War it was the custom in the South to own slaves. And, so, few in that great section of the Union felt there was anything wrong in *slave-trafficking*. Their fault was hidden under the cloud of witnesses in favour of it.

The same is true of the *Drink* custom. I well remember when a mere lad how an officer in the Church could become intoxicated, and few think anything of it. A man of eighty told me once that in his young days intoxication was not considered

out of place. Why? Because men everywhere drank to excess. The fault of it all was hidden in the custom.

You attend a *Theatre.* You hear or see something that perhaps shocks your sense of propriety. But the next morning the press extols it; you find all your friends who attended also eulogized it. What happens? Your criticism has likely faded from your view, lost under the approval of the multitude. And all the while it was wrong. But now you have joined the crowd in setting your seal of endorsement upon what was improper. It has become in your soul a secret fault.

Or think for a minute of the modern *Dance.* Custom places its approval upon certain dances that, apart from custom, would be considered altogether improper, if not immoral. And yet Society engages in them without any sense of wrong. Why? The fault has become submerged in the restless waters of custom. The same is true of *dress.* Immodesty and freakishness are buried beneath the universal fashion. Every five minutes a *home* is broken up and a marriage tie is annulled in the United States by divorce. And yet the public goes on with little, if any, sense of the terrific wrong that is being enacted at the very roots of our American life. Not long ago a lady in one of our neighbouring cities paid for a string of pearls $835,000.00, and on that very day five million precious mortals were literally starving to death in

Russia and the Near East for lack of funds to provide them food. But the average citizen read of the purchase without any sense of the tremendous fault that lay hidden beneath it all. Do you know that last year the people of the United States spent no less than $5,000,000,000 on luxuries alone, and only $50,000,000 to Christianize that half of the earth that has not yet heard the name of the world's Redeemer. And yet Christian America is totally unconscious of this far-reaching fault. The work of the Church is to uncover to the sons of men their secret faults. By this means has civilization progressed. And only by this means will it continue.

The secret faults of the human heart are the most perilous of all faults. You recall that Jesus said it was these faults that kept so many out of the Kingdom. Did we not do many mighty works in thy name, they ask? Yes, said the Lord, but "inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not unto me." They had never been conscious of this failure. It was a secret fault. And it shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes, these secret faults insidiously consume our spiritual strength and obstruct our soul's strength and happiness. Professor Drummond, in his "Tropical Africa," tells us of the White Ants. How, all unseen and unheard, they destroy the internal part of the wood out of which the huts are made. Finally, when least expected, the timber

collapses and the hut falls. How true is this of our secret faults. Invisibly and noiselessly they eat at the vitals of the heart. One day under temptation we unexpectedly give way. And we wonder why.

Our Christian life is perhaps at a standstill. We are making no progress. And we are troubled about it. What is the matter? One night last summer my automobile stopped suddenly and unexpectedly. It was in the forests of the Adirondacks. I examined everything that I thought might be out of order. But I could find nothing wrong. One thing I knew: there was a secret fault somewhere hidden from my knowledge. The next day a mechanic found the fault, corrected it, and I was soon on my way of progress again. If you are not growing in the spirit and likeness of our blessed Lord, you may know there is a fault somewhere and that you will never advance till it is removed. Then, may yours be the prayer of our text, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

Our happiness is often dampened by our secret faults. You have perhaps wondered with all your good health and unchecked prosperity why you are not really happy. The time David had trouble about the ark he lost his happiness. Like a wounded lark his song was rarely heard. His soul was unhappy through the livelong days and nights. He cried to the Lord, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." The sweet singer of Israel did

not really know that his trouble was in his disobedience somewhere to the will of God. You remember how unhappy Martha seemed to be? And she did not know till her Master told her that a secret fault was the cause of it, that she was "cumbered about many things." Yes, my friends, under ordinary circumstances, we should all be very happy, and, if we are not, it is more than likely there is a secret fault somewhere. Otherwise, why did Jesus say, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad"?

Then there is our influence. Perhaps you have asked, Why does my influence count for so little? I press the electric button, but no light or power follows. Why? I do not know just why. But I do know there is a fault somewhere. On examination the electrician finds some foreign substance has separated the points of contact. The secret fault is removed and the power is renewed. Not long ago a lady came to my study to speak with me about her husband. For some time she had put forth every effort to interest him in religious matters, but without success. After much questioning I placed my finger on what seemed to be the weak spot. It took some persuasion to convince her that the fault was within herself. Finally, she was convinced, and forthwith went out to "cleanse" herself from the secret fault A month later she reported, with the greatest delight, that her desire for her husband was realized. Her secret fault had

discounted her personal influence and she knew it not.

How often our secret faults curtail our influence in the *home.* We wonder why our children seem to disregard our best endeavours. And all the while some unconscious fault stands between us and them. It may be our constant worry over trifles or our over-anxiety for the clothes we wear and the food we eat. Or it may be a hateful, revengeful or unforgiving spirit. Or it may be a wanton neglect of Church and religious observance. Or, perhaps, it is a tendency to deal a little below the normal standards of downright honour in business matters. And all the while we are totally ignorant of the fault.

Sunday-school teacher, what of your influence over your class? Is it bearing precious fruit for the Kingdom? Can you discern your boys or girls growing in the knowledge and grace of our Lord and Saviour? Are they developing in the cardinal virtues of the Christian Faith? If not, don't blame *them;* look down deep and see whether or not there is a secret fault that is keeping the Spirit of God from flowing out through you into their young lives.

And, Church members, how much is your life counting among your friends and neighbours? Do you exert an impelling Christian prestige among them? Are you able to lead them outward and upward into higher realms of Spiritual Thought and

Desire? If not, *they* are perhaps not to blame as much as *you*. Something all unseen to you is wrong. A secret fault somewhere is weakening your moral influence. You are anxious, but you are running secretly handicapped.

Our secret faults, and not our conscious ones, should be our chief concern. Could we for a moment catch a glimpse of our hidden faults, we should better understand why God became flesh and in Christ bore away the sins of the world.

This brings me to say that only the Blessed Saviour can cleanse us from our secret faults. For they are so many and so deep-rooted. They are like the poisonous root-stocks of a garden. Mere plucking them up would be impossible. For, like weeds, they infest the garden of the heart. That is why God gave His only begotten Son that the infested hidden soil of the soul might be entirely cleansed from above. That's why at the Saviour's birth the angel said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their *sins*." That's why the great Forerunner cried, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." That's why we ever sing:

> "There is a Fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains."

That is why we pray to-day, as never before, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." "Search

me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see whether there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Let us turn the white light of Christ's pure character upon our inmost souls. It will reveal to us our hidden faults. Just as when a glass of what seems perfectly pure water is placed between us and the bright sun, a thousand impurities are seen. Let us carefully and steadily hold up our daily experiences toward our Perfect Example that the snow-white rays of His perfect life may stream down through our every thought. What a revelation! Then into His precious presence. And there abide in Him till every secret fault is gone.

VI

MORE THAN OTHERS

"What do ye more than others?"—MATTHEW 5:47.

THIS is a searching inventory question, surely appropriate for the first service of the New Year. It is a question Jesus asked the multitude. We may well ask ourselves the same question to-day, especially at this time of the year when business establishments everywhere are making an inventory. Their standards are dozens, pounds and yards. The standard that Jesus was most interested in was the standard of the soul that deals with these outward measures of value.

The Jews at this time were very content with themselves. They were living according to the standards of tradition. They were satisfied if they lived up to the Law delivered by Moses long before. They divided the world into Jews, who were saved, and Gentiles, who were lost. Then they divided themselves into the religious class, the Pharisees and the Scribes, and the worldlings, the publicans and sinners. As a religious class they were thoroughly satisfied with themselves, that they were living just about right: but Jesus came to

them and said, "Your standard belongs to the centuries ago, but I have a standard for you which is greater than this ancient one; you must live up to it. The standard that you are now living by is that which is adopted by the publicans and sinners, the moral outcasts of society."

Of course, the people who listened to Christ were astonished, but He went on to say, "If you love only those that love you, what reward have you?" Do not even the publicans the same? Remember these publicans were the worldlings, the non-Church members and non-Church-goers. How this must have pained the listeners, for they despised the publicans. You remember the Pharisee who said that he thanked God that he was not like the publican nearby.

Jesus told them that if they did good only to those who did good to them, they were on the level with the men that never darkened the door of the Church and made no profession whatever of religion. And, further, that if they loaned only to those from whom they expected favour, they were no better than moral outcasts, and that, if they saluted only those of their own household, they were no better than the beggar at their door.

Jesus had a higher standard for them. While the world does not love its enemies, *they* must. While the world refuses to do good to those who do not deserve it, *they* must. Jesus assured them

that He came not to destroy the statutes of Moses, but to bless them—to fill them to the full.

Let us see what our inventory of the past year has been and, like business concerns, let us make our inventory that we may take from it, or add to it, or change it, for the improvement of the new year.

In our National life, what did last year bring to us more than the year before? It brought a half a billion dollars worth more of corn, a hundred and fifty-four million dollars worth more of wheat, and so we might go on down the list. It was certainly a year above most other years in the matter of wealth and plenty. Compared with the Nations of Europe, while they have been starving, we have had plenty. We have sufficient wheat for ourselves and two hundred million bushels to spare for other peoples. The world finds us on this New Year's Sunday the creditor of the Nations. Our currency is at a premium among other peoples, while theirs is at a discount with us.

While we thank our blessed Lord for the prosperity that has come to us, let us give Him all the glory, for He alone is worthy of it. It is our duty as a nation to work with one common cheer and hope and zeal for the enlargement of His Kingdom and the blessing of His children on earth.

And now for an inventory of ourselves as *individuals*. As a matter of fact, Nations and Churches

are usually higher in their standards of living than the individuals that comprise them.

One of the great difficulties is that, like children, we are imitators. We are very apt to do just what others do. We are so prone to be satisfied so long as we do as well as our neighbours. How often we hear it said by a man, when asked to become a member of the Church,—"I am just as good as my neighbours, and in fact I am just as good as Church members are." Indeed this may be true, and too often it is true that non-members are just as good as Church members. Yes, too true. But let me say this to you, my brother, that if now, as a non-Church member you are as good as the Church members, when you become a Church member, you will be better than the Church members are.

In particular, coming to the question of *amusements,* there is the objectionable dance. Many Church members will say, "I know that that dance is really improper, that it is indecent, but everybody is dancing it, and why shouldn't I?" Here comes the word of the Master, "What more do ye than others? Do not even the publicans and sinners the same?"

Then there is the *Sunday* question. "My neighbours golf and play cards and attend theatres on Sunday. Why should not I too?" You forget you are a Church member and that more is expected of you than those who have never named the

name of the Lord of the Sabbath. When you do these things, you are certainly no better than the worldling and Churchless, Godless people who care not for the Lord's Day or what it stands for. So far as this is concerned, indeed, you are no better than the moral outcast in the lower parts of the city, for to them also Sunday is but a day of recreation and a "good time."

As to *Church attendance,* the Churchless moral outcasts down in the lower lanes of the land spend their Sundays sitting about smoking, reading the newspapers, sewing or baking, or building, or tending to business, or riding in automobiles. And yet this morning there are hundreds of our Church members in Buffalo doing the same. What better are they than the publicans and sinners, for do not these the same? "What more do ye than others?" We have a number of such members in Central Church. This very moment you would find them engaged at this hour of Service in just such worldy things as we have mentioned. I have no objection whatever to men smoking and reading the newspaper on Sunday or taking their families or friends for an automobile ride. I have no objection to the housewife doing such things as are necessary in the home, but let not these things be done at the expense of the soul by robbing you of the benefits of public worship.

Then take *prayer.* Publicans and sinners have no family altar. The moral street vagrants of

Buffalo have no family altar. The unchurched heads of homes have no family altar. Have you? It was found in a large gathering of Church members not long ago that only ten per cent of them worshipped as families in their homes. So far as the family altar is concerned, what more do ye than others, even publicans and sinners?

Or take *private prayer*. Some time ago a friend of mine lodged in a place where nine persons retired to rest. Only one out of the nine prayed. If you had been there, would you have prayed before retiring? The ordinary godless man of the land rarely prays. How do you answer the Master's question in this respect? "What do ye more than others?"

Or take *Church work*. I am not speaking now of those who cannot through circumstances, do Church work, but those who can. There is the man outside the Church. He does no Church work. There is the man sitting at the gambling table. He does no Church work. Do you do Church work? "What more do ye than others?" "Do not the publicans and sinners the same?"

As to your *contributions* to the Church. The man of the world, who cares nothing for Church, goes to the theatre and pays to hear the actor he likes and see the picture he enjoys. He goes on the principle of simply paying for what he gets. When you contribute to the Church, is it just because you hear the choir and the preacher you like?

In other words, "what do ye more than others?" What a test it is when we place our lives up against this searching question of Christ. It would almost seem to us at times that we could scarcely call ourselves Christians.

Look a little more closely and let us test ourselves a little more fundamentally. How does this question appeal to you *socially?* * * * We all have enemies. Every Church member has enemies. Every minister has his enemies. The fact is that, had we no enemies, we might well ask ourselves the question whether we are doing just what the Master wants us to do regardless of what others think. For, do we not read, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you?" There is no harm whatever in having enemies. The harm is in how we deal toward them. This is the searching question. Do we fight them? That is what the prize fighter would do. Do we return evil for evil? That is what the lowest thug in the city would do. Do we hate them? That is what even the devils would do. Do we hold a grudge against them? A common outcast would do that. Do we wait our opportunity to get even with them? That is just what the vilest sinner in Buffalo would do. Let us come now right up to the question of the text once more, "What do ye more than others?" "Do not even the publicans and sinners the same?" Perhaps you deal toward your enemies in a little more of a refined attitude. You treat them very cool. You

just "don't speak to them." When you do speak about them, you are ready to knock them. Someone wants you to make up with him, and you say, "Never—not till he comes to me and apologizes." Yes, that is just the way thieves and robbers and highwaymen do. That is just the way the outlaws of Russia and Mexico do. That is just the way the Turks and Bedouin Arabs act. Just be honest and ask yourself the question, "What do ye more than these publicans and sinners?" And sad to relate to-day, all over this land, there are tens of thousands of Church members who carry out this un-Christian spirit.

At this first New Year's Sabbath it is time to throw away this pagan spirit as refuse of the soul and trample it under foot as a thing to be despised and rejected of men.

Further, take our *hospitality*. We were all kind during the Christmas season. O how generous and real kind we were,—but to whom were we kind? To our friends, of course, and why not? But did we stop there? That is where the pagans and the outcasts of all the world stop. They are good to their friends, every one of them. Did we excel them in our kindness to our friends, or did we hear the call of the hungry poor of our city and the starving millions across the sea? Did we have the spirit of that elder of our Church who, hearing the cries of the anguished needy across in Europe, gave a dollar for every dollar given by the Sunday-

school Department over which he presides. That means Christian character, outstanding, clear-cut, like unto Christ. Down over the centuries, hear the words of our blessed Lover of men, when He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Then there is the question of *Prohibition.* Where do you stand as to the abolition of the saloon? Multitudes of good people half a century ago deplored the passing away of slavery. In that respect they were no better than the greedy plutocrat who bought and sold human lives. The anti-prohibitionists, the cutthroats and thugs, and the drunken libertines of our land are against prohibition. Are you? If so,—"What do ye more than these publicans and sinners?"

Then take the great question of *Industry.* Christian employer, is there any difference between you and the hard flint godless employer across the road? He gives his employee good wages. So do you. He requires but fair hours of work. So do you. He treats his workers courteously. So do you. But is that all? He treats his employees merely as so many hired hands. Do you? His first consideration is how much he can get out of them. Is that yours too? He does not pay them the best possible wages consistent with fair profits. Do you? He does not provide them with clean, bright, wholesome, sanitary working conditions.

Do you? He is not concerned about their prosperity and comfort and happiness outside his factory. Are you? If not, you are no better than the soulless selfish industrial publicans and sinners.

And you, employee, are you no better than the hireling who merely works for his wage and who has no other concern than just how much compensation he can get for the work of his brain and hand? If so, you are no better than the pagan labourer in the dark interior of China. Yea, more, you are no better in the sight of Heaven than the heathen who works just because he has to work, and that without any consideration of what good he can do to humanity through his labours. Come right up to the question, and ask yourselves and answer the question of the Master of Industry, "What more do ye than these industrial publicans and sinners who are exploiting the labour of their hands for just what they can get out of it?"

Let us look for a moment into the *home.* Down in the lower parts of our great city where the name of God is never mentioned in worship, and where the Church is never thought of, you will hear in many a home the crossfire of husbands and wives. You will hear the unbridled temper of the husband making the air hideous and you will hear the turbulent nagging of the wife. Christian husbands and wives, members of the Church of the blessed Lord, come let us face this question of Christ and answer it honestly,—"What do ye more than these?"

And on we might go through all the ranks of human life. And when we have answered this great searching question of the Master on this first Sunday of the New Year, and when we have looked the answer squarely in the face, perhaps we are not surprised at the retort: "I am as good as the Church members." There is altogether too much truth in it.

Starting out on this New Year, let us take to ourselves the Master Key of Jesus when He said to His chosen disciples nineteen centuries ago, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." O, my friends, let us so live, let us so walk, let us so talk and let us so think that the world will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. Let there be around us such a Christ atmosphere that when the sons of men are in our company they will detect something of the spirit of the Master of men, the Spirit that is just "different" from the non-Christian *others*.

VII

GOD MAKING OUR WORLD

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." —GENESIS 1:1.

"Behold, I make all things new."—REVELATION 21:5.

THE old belief that God made the world and completed it in six ordinary days resembles the question of intemperance—it is fast becoming a thing of the past. In the beginning God created the materials out of which He has ever since been making His world. The history of the Bible, nature, civilization, shows this very conclusively.

The light of modern scientific discovery serves but to conform such a statement. Take, for example, what the French chemist Becquerel, in 1896, brought to this truth when he discovered radioactivity. He found that radium continuously gives off radiations at an enormous rate, with no perceptible change in the amount of energy within the element itself. Other elements it is found act in a similar manner. In my college days I was taught that atoms were the units of matter, capable of no further analysis or subdivision. Now we find that in radiation much finer units called electrons are thrown off, 1,760 times smaller than the hydrogen

atom, the lightest of all known atoms. We are told now, that matter is made up of atoms and electrons. If electrons are radiated from a substance which in turn loses no energy, whence does the radiating substance get its undiminshed supply of energy? If from the sun, whence does the sun get its supply? Radio-activity thus at least substantiates the splendid law of the conservation of matter. And it still holds true that energy is coming from some source and is being conserved by some source on which science cannot yet place its finger and for which philosophy has yet no explanation. It remains for theology to answer the question with our text. "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" In this connection it is interesting to note just here the recent statement of George McCready Price, an American Professor of Chemistry, "The matter of our world must have had an origin at some time in the past wholly different in degree and different in kind from any process going on around us that we call a natural process." Significantly, the professor confesses there is no explanation but the words of our text.

In making His world, it is evident that God has not created any substance since the point of time mentioned in our text, "In the beginning." Every evidence goes to show that since then God has been *building up* His world—"Behold, I make all things new." He has been building up *new* forms from the original substance. For example, there

is no more truth as a moral substance than "in the beginning," but there are new forms of truth out of which the world organisms of truth have been constructed. The same is true of right and honesty, purity and chastity, good-will and godliness. We cannot add to nor take from these qualities of the soul—not an iota. But their *forms* change, just as the physical forms of motion, heat and electricity. To illustrate, you are *right* toward your wife and family. You go out to business and you are at once *right* toward the man with whom you do business. You fulfill your promise to the letter; you carry out your contract absolutely; you give full value for money received. What is this but your domestic rightness changed into commercial rightness, but in substance the same rightness.

Further, this moral substance rises to higher and yet higher forms. All along the ages the constructive Spirit of God has been changing and building up these moral atoms into ever higher forms of human thought and conduct. The New Testament is not the negation of the Old; it is its fulfillment. Jesus assured us he "came not to destroy but to fulfill." He came to bring higher soul units into being, and to construct out of these the higher totality of the soul. He came to organize into a higher spiritual unity the ancient vital elements and forms of Judaism. He came that we "might have life and that we might have it more abundantly." An "eye for an eye and a tooth for

a tooth" is one of the forms of the Mosaic code, but Jesus came to change and organize this in accord with the higher and finer forms of the soul's intuition. And so we find his new creation. "Love your enemies" and "pray for those that despitefully use you." In those early days of Moses, it was sufficient to help those of your own race. But Jesus takes those moral elements and transforms them and reconstructs them into the higher organic glory of the Good Samaritan. And that is what lay all the while potentially at the bottom of the commandment to "love thy neighbour as thyself."

The same old principle of human justice was still at work in the days of Jesus as it was in the days when Moses handed to the people of Israel the Ten Great Words of the Moral Law. But Jesus lifted it up into a higher form. He transformed it into the higher energy of the soul called the Golden Rule. He created at once a unity of truth higher than the world had ever reached or conceived. No man ever spoke as He did. He ever brought forth things new out of the old. Why? Because He possessed all moral and spiritual power in heaven and upon the earth. He had power to forgive all sins as well as to heal all manner of disease. "Which is easier?" He asked. They were both alike under His supreme control. God through Him was thus producing new elements of moral and spiritual truth, and constructing them into the very highest unity of human thought! All

along the ages he has thus been gradually reconstructing into higher forms all national and international relations. What seemed right and proper a century ago seems wrong to-day. Hence, the recent World War. There was a time not so long ago when Germany could have acted as she did without having half the world on her back. But that day is past. The human soul has been growing all the while. God has been in His great world workshop making His world. By degrees He has been changing, pulling down, building up and reconstructing on a finer, wider and diviner scale.

With the aid of scientific research we are finding out some most interesting facts never before known. We used to think it impossible to change elements. They were long regarded as irreducible. We now find they can be reduced and changed. For example, after Uranium has given off a Helium atom three times, it becomes radium. Radium in turn gives off helium atoms, electrons, and x-rays—and common lead is left. "How can these things be?" Only God knows. It is one of His ways of breaking down the old and building up the new. "Behold, I make all things new." He is ever remaking His world. And He will ever continue until His new heaven and new earth appear.

Or take the common law of gravitation. Why does this book fall when I let it go? You say the earth attracts it. Why does this needle rise? You say by the magnetism of the magnet. But how can

a thing attract or influence a thing where it is not itself? Only God knows. A molecule of water is made of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen, says physical science. Yet there is neither hydrogen nor oxygen in the water. And, further, the combined atomic weights and proportions do not entirely constitute the water. It requires the mystic unity of the elements. Why? God only knows. It only shows us that the Lord is every moment at work moving, changing, making and remaking His world.

The same is true of life both vegetable and animal. Both kinds of life arise from protoplasm. But by no known means can the protoplasm of animals be distinguished from that of plants. It is just the unseen hand of God at work making now one and now another, according to "the working of His good pleasure." Though the protoplasm of the brain of a horse is the same as that of his foot, why does one become a brain and the other a foot? Up to a certain point, it is impossible by any known means to ascertain whether the embryo is that of a fish, a dog, or a man. Why? God is at work, all unseen and silently, making His world according to the secret designs of His good will. When He designs to fashion man, He breathes into his dust His own creative breath, and man comes forth in His image. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Every new-born child is thus a new creation fresh from the breath of the Maker. Moreover, man, the greatest marvel of God's creative works, is every day breaking down and building up, under the constant workmanship of the Creator. No wonder the Psalmist exclaimed, "I will give thanks unto Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

And God has been making man higher and higher all through the ages. Scientists tell there are at least eighty vestiges in the human body which the Maker has discarded for better organs. The appendix vermiformis is one of them, and possibly the tonsil is another. The result is that every day we are cutting these out as cumberers of the body. The Maker is ever busy improving His creation. He is making better brains and better hearts and better hands. This is just another way of saying He is always busy improving civilization. For example, He has so improved our judgment that henceforth civilized nations are setting about to settle their international disputes by reason instead of the sword. Militarism, like a poisonous abscess, has for many a day been preying upon the vitals of the world body politic. And God is determined to get rid of it, that He may build up His world in the health and strength of peace and good-will. Then will the world body renew its health and go forth with new red clean blood in its veins and new inspiration in its breast, and new ideals in its soul.

But God takes His own time in the making of

His world. And He usually takes a long time. At least it seems long to us. And we naturally ask, Why? While we have no answer, perhaps it may suffice to say, He waits till the time is fulfilled —till He has everything in readiness. Why, for example, did Jesus not come long before He did? The world was not ready for Him. "Why did not the carpenters come sooner?"—you ask of the builder of your house. The *masons* were not through, he replies. So, remember, when Jesus came, he was to add to God's world structure its finest and most essential handiwork. He was to fit into God's Temple of humanity the chief corner-stone, the Redemptive Cross and the Sermon on the Mount. In the "*fullness* of time" he came. He could not have come sooner; the way was not yet open. The priests came when the prophets were through, and Christ came when the priests were through. Had He come sooner, it would have been a cosmic mistake. The eternal plans of heaven would have been aborted. And had He come later, calamity equally great would have resulted. No—He came in the "fullness of time," according to the plan of the Builder.

When Jesus came He did wondrous things. The "people marvelled." He healed the dying and raised the dead, He restored the blind and transformed the elements. But, said He to His disciples, "Greater things than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." And all along the ages, ever

since, He has been at work, through his Spirit, doing those greater things. But why does He not complete the whole at once? Why wait so long? We are not ready for it. Why does He not come again in His regnant glory? We are not ready for Him. Why does He keep us so long in ignorance of the full meaning of life and all its mysterious experiences? We are not ready to be told. He says to us to-day, as He said to His disciples long ago, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." When we are ready to meet the Master, to fit into His completed world, to hear His full-orbed truth, then, and not till then, will He come. We may ask, why did the World War continue for four and a quarter years with its overwhelming carnage and sorrow? Our enemy was not yet ready to be beaten. The fires had not yet purged him sufficiently; they had not heated him to a point where the Supreme Ruler could mould him as He wished. And further, I am not sure that *we* were quite ready for victory and final peace. I am not sure that the rank materialism and sensualism and spiritual indifference that so long consumed our soul were sufficiently burned out of us. No, we could not have peace till it was the peace of God, born of the Prince of Peace. It could not come before the "fullness of the time."

God is building a Temple of *World Democracy*. And, like every other great building, a deep abiding foundation must be provided. Much has to be

cleared away to make place for it. Not long ago I stood on Broadway, New York City, looking down thirty feet into an excavation. I asked the diggers why they were digging so deep. "Because," they replied, "we are going to build so high." God is building His temple as high as heaven, and so He digs as deep as the grave. He has been digging the foundation of this temple of Democracy for many a century. We need go back no further than the days of the English Magna Charta, then on up through the Lutheran Reformation, the American and French Revolutions. Many asked why did the Civil War last so long? Because slavery was to go forever. Why so long to banish the saloon? Because it is never to return. Then why war so long? Because war is to be a long time gone. Because the parapets of Democracy are to strike the stars and encircle the world. World brotherhood is going to link Heaven and Earth. It is to be God's will done on earth as it is in heaven. On this Rock of Ages He will build and complete His eternal Temple of Christian Democracy.

And God is busy making other parts of His universe as well. He is still busy making and perfecting suns and stars and planets. Further, and may I say it reverently, He is at work making Heaven. Did not the Master of Heaven say, "I go to *prepare* a place for you"? You have asked, why is one taken and the other left? Perhaps the answer

is found in our theme—God is building Heaven, and the place for the surviving one is not yet ready. In any event, happy is the one who is ready when his place in heaven is ready.

And so our Father-Maker is busy night and day in His unseen workshop silently making and perfecting His Universe. Up to sixteen vibrations of sound-waves per second, we hear nothing, and at 256 vibrations we hear the middle C note on the piano, but beyond 24,000 vibrations we hear nothing again. Were my ears attuned sufficiently, I think I could have heard God making those beautiful flowers. I think I could hear His unnumbered hosts at work in His upper kingdom. I think I could hear His words as of old, when He said, "Let us make." Up to 458 billion vibrations per second, we can see nothing; beyond 727 billion we can see nothing again. Were my eyes keen enough, I think I could have seen God making those flowers; I could see Him rolling off worlds from His finger-tips; I could see the prophets, priests, saints and loved ones whom He has perfected in the building of His Kingdom. O what a sight—thus to behold the Master-Heart and Hand at work building up and completing everything for the good of those who love Him. I could see the crown awaiting me; I could see the host at work upon His unseen Temple, as they serve Him night and day. I could see them ruling with Him over empires of which this Republic is but a parish. Think of it—Rulers

with Him over worlds in the making and completing. What a glory!

And we are all builders in this world-making. Every soul has a nail to drive, a stone or a brick to add to this Temple of God's World. The Great Builder has appointed each a part to do. For remember we are "co-labourers marching with God." We cannot, we dare not, leave the world till each has done his allotted share. Every day's duty faithfully done brings the day of completion so much the nearer. Every faithful day's business you perform hastens on so much the nearer the "far-off divine event" when the world of Commerce will be perfected in honesty and justice. Every day of homelife you have faithfully lived, brings so much nearer the day when the Home will be God's perfected inner sanctuary of love. Every day of faithful citizenship you have carried out will hasten on just that much nearer the Citizenship of Heaven which God wants to establish in every nation on the earth. Every day you live in allegiance to the rule of Christ in your soul, you have added another stone to the great international Kingdom of the King of Kings throughout the world. It is the little drops of water and the little grains of sand that make the world God is building for the sons of men. Heaven and earth are just one vast world in the making. And we all, whether here or in heaven, are builders. Some He calls to work in places here, and some in places there. But, wher-

ever He calls us to work and whatever He calls us to do, it is so important that, without it, God could not complete His world. "Go work to-day," He calls, and then He adds, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

What dignity! What worth while! Born to serve the Father of the world, to be a world-builder, making a Universe for God, and building His Kingdom for the sons of men. For, "we are labourers together with God." Then—

"O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free,
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care."

VIII

THE SILENCE OF ETERNITY

"Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."—ISAIAH 35:5.

THE deepest and realest things in human life are beyond the pale of sense. They can be best expressed in terms of silence. The profoundest verities of every-day relationships fall within its scope. The silences of home, business, politics, society, education and religion are by far the greatest of their realities. It is for this reason that the universe seems shrouded for the most part in baffling mystery. Doubtless Nature has ten thousand voices but the poor ear of the human soul fails to hear. Time, what is it? Could we answer this question, the mystery of life itself would be solved. The past lies behind us in the far stretch of silence. The present is as a passing stream whose deep is so great it glides on in silence. The future is ever coming to us with footsteps so light we cannot hear it. And so man journeys on wrapt largely in the silence of eternity. That is why Jesus never wearied telling us to have faith. He saw there was no other way. He saw that only the ear of faith could break the silence of the

eternal which everywhere and everywhile surrounds us.

There are the silences of *Nature*. At the foot-hills of the Alaskan Mountains I have gazed upward by the hour at the great snow and ice-capped peaks. And every thought spelled the silence of eternity. The imperial language with which it spoke to my soul. I am sure you have experienced just what I wish to tell you. You have felt the impact of the mountain silence that seemed to open to your soul such a sublime solemn sense of the eternal as never came to you at any other time. It seemed to you as if

> "Creation sleeps: as if the general pulse
> Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause,
> An awful pause,—prophetic of the doom."

Even in the way of common life, we come across this silence of nature. Have you not ridden along a country road on a dark night, when you saw and felt nothing but the silent darkness? It perhaps reminded you of Isaac Taylor's "A Country Ride in a Dark Night," that masterpiece on earth's common silences. We do not need to gaze into the heavens to breathe the mystic silence of stars and planets. No, it lies at our door; at every hand it elbows us; it jostles us amid the throng; it crowds us in the forum; it sits with us in the pew; it whispers to us in prayer; it embraces us in sorrow.

The Silences of the Human Soul are as varied

as the forms of life itself. They all go to make up the world that lies down deep in every breast. All human experiences that matter most are the ones so profound that they transcend the power of ear to hear or eye to see. They are the silent experiences, known in their reality only to ourselves or those who have passed through similar depths or heights. Real joy is the earless and wordless kind. Paul calls it "unspeakable and full of glory." A piece of music or a sermon thrilled your soul. You tried to tell someone how much you enjoyed it. You exclaimed, "It was grand! It was glorious! It was simply divine!" But your words failed you. The experience was deeper than your words could reach. It was so real you could not tell it. It was so real it belonged to the silence of the Eternity in your soul. It is the same with all other emotions. We are frightened stiff—silent. We are so surprised we are dumfounded—silent. We become white with anger. Sorrow seals our lips. Beyond a certain velocity, air vibrations become silent to the ear. They outrange the sensibility of the human organ. The same is true of sight and every other sense. So is it with the soul. Its deepest and highest reaches outrange the grasp of every faculty, and only the silence of eternity is left.

This accounts at least in part for what seems to us so often the inscrutable ways of Providence. It is only because His ways are so high above our sensibility that they seem strange. They are so far

beyond our powers of ear and eye and reason that they are silent to us, but they are not silent to God. No one can hear the watch tick like its maker. No one can understand the secret ways of the automobile like its builder. His ear is tuned to the work of his hands. So is it with what appears to us the strange ways of Providence. The ear of the Maker is tuned to hear where we cannot hear; the eye of the Maker is focussed to see where we cannot see; the mind of the Maker is adjusted to understand what we cannot comprehend. That is why Jesus did not attempt to explain the mystery of the Eternal or the common silences of this earthly life; we could not have understood Him, had He tried. So He was content, as He was obliged, to say, "Fear not, only believe."

Let us look a little further into our every-day silences. Think of the silence of *harmony*. The engine is silent whose parts run in perfect harmony. So is it with the thousand relationships of every passing day. There is the silence of friendship, so complete that its mere companionship is its great delight. There is also the silence of sympathy. The difference between the Priest, the Levite and the Good Samaritan was fundamentally a silent one. The two former passed by because they lacked what the latter had—the silent virtue of compassion. The Good Samaritan story has its primary meaning in the source of its kindness, not the kindness itself. He possessed the eternal

silence of fellow-feeling. From this silence sprang the deed that is the type of all true Christian brotherhood. In fact this is true of Christianity itself. It is not a constituted organism; it is a hidden life. It is not a theory of thought; it is a silent dynamic. It is not a system of conduct; it is a well-spring of feeling. It is not contained in Bible or Creed; it is silently incarnated in every-day human life. It is not anything we see or hear; it is the silence of Eternity dwelling supreme in every Christ-determined life.

Then take the silence of *Sorrow* and *Suffering*. When the soul is heavy and the heart is all but broken, O how futile are the words of well-meaning friends. But how much it helps when someone, perchance a stranger, placing his hand on our shoulder, says, "My heart bleeds for you, for I know by experience the pangs that rend your very soul. I know exactly what you are passing through —God pity and comfort you." At once there comes the sense of the silent fellowship of sufferers. For it is commonplace to say that the more real sorrow and suffering are, the more silent they are.

Once more, look at the silence of *Character*. It is the silent source of all human conduct. It is like the silent mountain fastness that sends its stream down into the plain, bearing blessing untold to the multitudes among whom it chances to pass. There is no virtue or sin in words or deeds. Our tongues never lie, and our hands never steal.

They are never honest. They only obey the behest of Character. A man is not a liar because he lies, or a thief because he steals. No. He lies and steals because he is a lying or stealing character. The source of his conduct is thus unseen and silent. No microscope can detect it, and no analysis can find it. There it is, hidden—the silence of God's grace, or the silence of sin—yet determining life and destiny. Ah, how silently it acts; and there we are unconsciously always growing stronger or weaker till one day it is all revealed to us. A temptation like a gale assails us, and to our joy we stand or to our sorrow we fall. Not long ago a young man of twenty came to my study. He bore a spotless reputation. So far as we all knew, his character was beyond reproach. But to my amazement he began by asking me to assist him in writing a farewell letter. I asked, "Are you leaving town?" "No," he answered. "Are you leaving home?" "No," came the answer again. "Well—what is your idea in writing a farewell letter?" "I want to end it all; my life is a failure," was his shocking explanation. At once I surmised some secret sin of long standing. He confessed he had been secretly committing a certain crime, and now in his judgment only death could relieve him. When I was a pastor in Cleveland, Ohio, a brilliant young physician came up to me at the close of an evening Service, and expressed his desire to see me in my study. His first remark was, "I wish

you would pray for me; my mind is failing me as the result of sin committed twenty years ago." Tears trickled down his cheeks to the floor, and in a paroxysm of grief he joined me in prayer. Hidden and silent for twenty years all unknown, it was doing its destructive work. Within a year he was in a hospital for the insane. If the sons of men could but keep in mind the silent insidiousness of sin, this sin-stricken earth would soon have a different story to tell.

Speaking of the silence of sin and virtue brings us to think of the recent World War. We spent a good deal of time in its early phase asking what caused it. And no one ever seemed able to intelligently answer our question. It was not caused by armies or navies or great war preparations. No—the cause was something far more profound and subtle. It was not an act nor a sum of actions that caused the war. It was a deep, hidden, silent growth—a malignant political growth—which the world calls the cancerous sin of militarism. Its growth was so silent that the world did not detect it. Thus, even its closest neighbours, all unsuspecting, were totally unprepared to meet the deadly sore when it broke out.

But now we are asking the one great question—when will all war end? Had we the sensibility of the eternal, it would be easy to answer this greatest of all questions to-day. But, mark you, somewhere the Angel of Peace has recorded it all—only the

record lies silently beyond the range of the human eye.

But one day we'll see and hear it all. The progress of civilization is just one great chapter of the silences of eternity broken anon by the onward march of human brain and heart and will. The telescope has broken its hundreds of silences; the microscope its thousands, and electricity its tens of thousands. The silence of disease is steadily giving way to the forces of anaesthetic, the scalpel and the serums. The silence of the air is ever yielding its secrets to the genius of men, so that its electricity is harnessed for ten thousand forms of service. No longer does the silence of distance intercept our conversation; a man in New York talks with his wife who chances to be in San Francisco. Men have taken to themselves the wings of flight, and the silences of the clouds are penetrated. With telescope and spectrum man traces the movements and unfolds the wonders of the sun and stars and planets, and so breaks the age-long silence of the heavens.

And so the process goes on. The eternal ever becoming the temporal; the unseen ever becoming the seen; the potential ever becoming the actual; the ideal ever becoming the real; the mysterious ever becoming the friend of man; the silence of eternity ever revealing the Goodness of God.

The silences of life are filled with the primary importance of every day's experience. *Love,* for

example, the greatest power in the world, lies silent as eternity. You can't fathom it; you can't analyze it; you can't see it; you can't hear it; you can't touch it; you can't weigh it; you can't measure it. Yet there it is, the biggest and best thing on earth —absolutely silent. With it, life's tide flows full; without it, life's tide ebbs out and only the barren shore remains. Look, before the marriage altar there stands a young couple to be united in marriage. What makes the great event the blessed reality it is? The ceremony? No. The vows? No. The statutes? No. Beside the ceremony, did you hear anything? No. Did you see anything? No. Then what? It was the *silence of eternity*—the great love hand of God silently at work welding together two hearts as one—"They twain shall be one flesh," and, "whom the Lord hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Or take the birth of your child—another great pillar in the temple of human life. The event filled your heart with joy unspeakable. And why? The little form? No! The little cry? No! Then why? The silence of eternity!—down deep beyond all words all unseen and unheard the great Father of us all was softly and sweetly at work playing on the parental love strings of your soul. And those precious love strains will never die out from your parent heart, for they belong to the silence of the eternal. There, in the silent holy of holies of your being, God linked together your soul and your little

one with a tie that not all the force of time or eternity can break.

Here do we come upon something of the meaning of the universe. How the human soul pants in its quest after the meaning of this old world in which we struggle along from day to day. It calls to mind the hero in Tancred, who prostrated himself on the barren peak of Mount Sinai, and cried out for a new revelation—some break in the silence of God's lips since the days of Moses and Jesus. Doubtless it is this longing of the soul to pierce its own silence that has erected Churches, formulated sects, created legends, provoked revolutions and promoted reformations. Man is ever asking "Whence have I come? Where am I? and Whither am I going?" Science gives us many facts; Philosophy much logic; Theology many creeds: but the stars glitter on; the winds whistle by; angels sing on their "faithful watches keeping," and no word—not a single word from heaven or earth—as to the primary and final meaning of the Universe.

What then? Is there no answer to the mystic plans and providences of God? Yes, there assuredly is—only we cannot detect it. Had we the faculties of the Eternal, there would be no eternal silence for us and there would be no more mystery. It is only a matter of our sensibility to the movements and ways of God and His Universe. And step by step we are growing in that sensibility. So,

as we saw a few moments ago, the silence of eternity is gradually becoming broken. Did I say, "Eternity?" Yes—for all the laws and principles of time are eternal. Some day there will be no Silence of Eternity. There was a time when we saw only a few thousand stars; now we count them by the hundreds of thousands. There was a time when you could hear no one beyond a few hundred yards; now you can hear them whisper across the continent. There was a day when we could see nothing smaller than a grain of dust; now we count germs and blood cells by the millions though hidden to the unaided eye. There will come a day not far distant, says a scientific sage, when standing at Ellis Island, you can see your friend on the wharf at Liverpool. Yes, the Silence of Eternity is passing away.

God is shouting to us with ten thousand voices. He has been thundering His secrets down the ages, but these poor sluggish sin and sense fettered ears and eyes have not been able to discern Him. Here and there keenly organized minds have heard Him and told His message to the ages. But as yet we have heard Him chiefly in the rumbling thunder, the whispering winds, the boisterous waves, the whirl of business, the babbling of society, and the crash of warring nations. But with every new day more and more acute is our sense becoming, and God's silences are passing away.

Perhaps there is no silence that troubles us like

the silence of *death*. What is death, but the velvet footstep of Jesus entering the home, with step so silent and voice so low that we cannot see or hear Him. The act is so divinely fine that our earth-made ears cannot hear, nor our eyes behold Him. Had we eyes and ears as refined as eternity, we could hear His tender footfall and see His gracious form as in His shepherd arms He takes our precious ones away to be with Him forever. For does He not plainly say—"I will come again, and receive you unto myself." And does not the apostle say—"Now I see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." And are not our future faculties but the present ones perfectly organized and inter-related? Moreover, it is not too much to say that, were our senses of hearing and seeing sufficiently refined, we could see our departed dear ones in their present estate clothed in the spiritualized body of the blessed Redeemer.

I venture further to say the soul is not invisible—it is invisible only to us at present. To-morrow we may be able to see it. There is indeed nothing invisible nor silent. They are only so to us with just the kind of eyes and ears we now have. There is no mystery in the human world. What seems so is but our clouded vision, as we see through life's glass but darkly. There is no silence of eternity. What seems so is but the silence of unhearing time-stopped ears. But the Kingdom of Christ's light is on the way. Then all the world will ring

out for us the voice of God. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."

Then bear in mind, amid the silences of your daily life, that God is walking with us, but we are not able yet to hear His footstep; that He is talking with us, but our vulgar ears cannot hear Him yet; that He is working among us, but our sight is yet so clouded we cannot well observe Him; that He is carrying out His plans, but our minds are so dimmed with the dust of time that we can only faintly trace them. In short, do not forget that all earth's silences are of ourselves and not of God; that He has no secret to hide and no mystery to unfold. It is ours to spiritualize the sensibility, to set aside all that is base, and appropriate all that is divine. Thus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And, as if to point out the way of this clear vision, the Master adds—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." What silent deeps were broken up when Paul saw Jesus, when Augustine beheld the Redeemer, and Luther caught the vision of the High Priest of all men, and what voices wait for us from out the silence of eternity as our ears become unstopped, by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus. That is what he meant when he said so often, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

Then let our love for God become so profound that it will move among the deep silences of our

soul. That is the import of Christ's call to love Him with all the heart and soul and mind. That is the kind that goes down beneath all the differences of man-made creeds and forms of religion. Let us love our fellows with the love that goes down into the creedless silence of eternal brotherhood. The kind that gets down beneath the cavilling of race or sect or caste. This love which is born of God is the master key to all the silences of time and eternity. In its bosom lies the blessedness of all earth's silences. In it rests the mystic silence of all God's plans and providences that so often seem so strange and baffling. So wrote the poet:

"O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
When Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love."

IX

ARTICULATED RELIGION

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—JOHN 1:14.

WE hear a good deal these days about the religion of the articulate. Some explain it in terms of what they call pragmatic theology; others call it the religion of the Social Order; while still others designate it in plain terms as practical Christianity. Called by whatever name, it is found deep hidden in our text. We are here taught that, so far as humanity is concerned, there is no religion of the inarticulate. We know Christianity only as it becomes flesh. Christ becomes a reality to us primarily, and, indeed, only, as he becomes flesh and dwells among us. Carlyle may write on the philosophy of clothes, and Brierly may muse on "Well-Dressed Souls." Philosophers may reason about the theories of being, while Scientists may discover the laws that govern matter. And Theologians may weave out their well-spun doctrines of God and the Soul. Still there remains the fact that all their efforts are valueless till they become flesh and dwell among the sons of men.

Let us look at this fact of human nature as we

see it in its daily garb. What, for example, is human life unless it is articulated? You say, it is a principle. But what is a principle unless it is articulated? In other words, life is nothing to us unless it becomes flesh and dwells among us. "The body returns to the dust whence it came, but the spirit unto God who gave it." But what of the Spirit, if it had never become articulated through the dust? Apart from such incarnation, the Spirit would never have been a reality to us, and therefore, would never have meant anything to us. Had Christ never become flesh, his glory, his beauty and his power would never have been to us a fact, or a reality in any shape or form.

Or take the ordinary *virtues.* What is honesty apart from the honest man? Nothing, so far as humanity goes. There is no virtue in honesty; there is virtue only in an honest man. Honesty must become flesh and dwell among us. It has no being or value otherwise. The same is true of all other virtues. The same is also true of all vices. Take for example immorality. There is no such thing as non-personal immorality. There are just immoral men and women. Immorality is incarnated vice. It is vice made flesh and dwelling among us.

This principle of incarnation is the *basis of all human experience.* Metaphysicians have long told us this. They have assured us beyond the shadow of a doubt that all experience is formed as it comes

to us through the moulds of our own individual intelligence. Every man thus carries around in him his own world. And no two worlds are quite alike. We have one universe but 1,500 million different worlds. The universe is ever becoming flesh and dwelling among us, just as it becomes articulated through the flesh and blood of every individual. Each individual is thus the universe incarnate. Apart from this articulation there is no world for us, and the universe itself is nothing to us. In fact unembodied personal consciousness within itself is mere negation. Nowhere is this fact more evident than in the realm of the moral and spiritual.

Apply it further to the sphere of *conduct*. We speak of this or that good or bad principle. Whereas principles are neither good nor bad. Goodness or badness does not belong to an abstract principle. It belongs to a living person. Things are neither good nor bad,—men are both. "Only man is vile," says the poet. And only man is good. When you reason about right or wrong, you reason about the souls of men "made flesh." For nothing is right or wrong; only men are right or wrong. In fact, acts have no virtue; only the person who performs them. Lips never tell truth or falsehood; only the person behind the lips. Hands never do anything kind or unkind; only the soul that moves the hands. Adultery is not an act; it is a sensuous attitude of mind. It is sense made flesh unbridled

and unsanctified. Jesus said the mental articulation of lust constituted adultery even apart from the act. The Ten Commandments mean nothing till they become flesh and dwell among us. There is no virtue in tables of stone. They must become concrete to become real. They can be no more real than the designs or plans of Solomon's Temple were real compared with the Temple itself. Designs unexecuted are as empty and meaningless as nothing. Just so is the Decalogue. It is just words—"Ten Moral Words"—absolutely inert and valueless until they "become flesh and dwell among us." Out of, and upon these words, man builds his moral temple. But until used for this purpose they are as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

It was this very fact which the Pharisees in the days of Jesus failed to understand. It is this very fact that has proven a tremendous stumbling block to the Christian Church almost ever since. The Pharisees formulated their religion; they did not articulate it. They strained at a gnat, but swallowed a camel. This is exactly what the Christian Church has done for many a century. Their religion has been a plan rather than a structure, a creed rather than an incarnation. In plain terms, it has been more a question of what they believed than how they lived.

The Reformation at its base was more moral than theological. In fact Martin Luther's primary object was the moral regeneration of the Church. The

Church was dogmatically strong but morally inert. It fell to the lot of John Calvin and other reformers to enforce the incarnate reality of the Christian religion. They insisted there was no virtue in Christianity for any believer whose daily life did not bear the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit and the flesh are not two but one. There is no Spirit life for us that is not embodied in the flesh. There is no Christianity that is not crimsoned with the red life blood that courses through the human heart. The Christian Church has taken a long time to understand that all the belief in the world is in itself powerless to redeem, to restore and to save. That word "belief" has become so bedraggled along the roads of usage that its original content has all but left it. It has become so thin and vapourous that little vitality remains in it. How different it has become from the energizing and vitalizing and transforming word it was as it fell from the lips of Jesus. "Thy faith hath saved thee" rang repeatedly from his tongue, with the clarion peal of eternity in it. But it was the kind of faith that pressed its way through the multitude that it might but touch the hem of His garment. It was the kind that climbed walls and tore open roofs that it might reach the presence of Jesus. It was the kind that like a mighty sea surged in the depths of the soul, and moved hands and feet to obey its imperial behests. Faith, this kind of faith, my friends, is not a mental theory, it is a spiritual

dynamic. It is not an ecclesiastic creed; it is a personal conviction. Faith is not what you believe, it is what you live by. You cannot tell your belief; you can only live it. It cannot become doctrine; it can only become flesh. It cannot be written on paper; it can only be engraven on your heart.

The same is true of *prayer*. Prayer is never said; it is always breathed. God never hears prayers; He just hears His children praying. Prayer is not an act, it is a communion. It is not something you see or touch or even talk about. It is a oneness between God and His children. See a man in prayer, and you behold the unity of Heaven and earth incarnate. O, how the world has missed this true dynamic of prayer! Just like the Pharisee who only "said" his prayers, and missed the blessing the Lord intended he should have. While, on the other hand, the publican found it. What was the difference between their prayers? The one was made words and the other was "made flesh." Prayers are neither ritualistic nor extempore. They are the yearnings of the spirit articulated in soul fellowship with the Father-heart of all mankind. Jesus emphasized this truth when at Jacob's Well, he declared that prayer was neither here nor there, but just a burning soul-worship of the Father. "They that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." That is, their prayer must breathe the warmth of their very heart-blood.

Yet how many of us have never gotten away from the Mediaevalism of just "saying" our prayers. We start our children off on the pathway of prayer by teaching them they must "say" their prayers. Frequently, we read in funeral press accounts that prayers were "read" by the Reverend So and So. What a travesty on the most sacred exercise of the human soul. For prayer is not made up of words or ideas. It is the kinship between the Father and His child made flesh in the most holy of all sacraments in heaven or on earth. It is not an ecclesiastic act; it is a soul experience.

The same is true of Church membership. For a long time we have counted our membership by the names on the Church Roll. For mathematical purposes this may be allowed. But by no manner of means does it constitute Christian Church membership. Christian Church membership is not a name; it is a relationship. It is not a record; it is an experience. It is not a matter of vows; it is a matter of daily life. Your membership must become flesh and dwell among us. It must roll from your lips and hands with the warm breath of your soul upon it. Your membership cannot be an ecclesiastic standing; it must be a burning light. It cannot flicker in the hidden corners of your confession; it must "shine before men," as the Master said, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." If your membership does not thus become concrete in office,

workshop and home, it is as meaningless and valueless as a physician's prescription that remains unfilled. The reality of Church membership is its incarnation. It is not so much a matter of membership in this or that branch of the Christian Church. It is vastly more a question of its becoming articulated in the ten thousand experiences of our daily lives. Our "Lord, Lord," on Sunday, is as empty and flat as a punctured tire if on Monday it does not colour our dealings toward our employer or employee, or the public with whom we chance to do business. The supreme test of Church membership is whether or not it becomes "flesh and dwells among us" *every day in the week.* The world despises nothing more than a mere profession. It will forgive a man for stealing or lying, but it will not forgive him his inconsistency. Your profession must become flesh.

This principle of nature is nowhere more evident than in the realm of *Christian Service.* Jesus spent little time theorizing about this great duty of the human soul. He spent most of his public life demonstrating the necessity of it. In the parable of the Good Samaritan the story of it all is told. Sympathy was the root of its meaning. Had you conversed with the priest and the Levite, you would have found their conversation just as sympathetic for the needy as was the "Certain Samaritan." Wherein was the difference? The compassion of the Samaritan moved him to action. The

sympathy of the other two was so thin, so unreal, that it did not crystallize into action. The Master speaks of only one of them having compassion. Why? There is no reality of any kind to the mind of Jesus but the kind that becomes flesh and dwells among us. To Him there was only one compassion, and that was the kind that became warm with the breath of the soul—the kind that went out from the tongue and finger-tips in words and deeds of help and comfort for the stranger brother in need.

No wonder then that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." It was but the genius of nature having her way. We see the Christ of Eternity as we see the Christ of Galilee. Lifted up in flesh and blood, He is drawing all men unto Him. Throughout all the world He is to-day reincarnating Himself in the daily lives of untold multitudes of all kindreds, peoples and tongues. It is not a question of His virgin birth; it is entirely a question of His becoming *flesh,* and so obeying the primary behest of human consciousness.

Moreover, to Jesus there was no earthly truth outside the human soul. The Kingdom of Heaven was to him not an abstract principle; "it is within you," he declared. It does not consist of statutes; it is a spiritual universe. It is not an organization; it is a vital force. It is not a principle; it is the Spirit of God made flesh among men anywhere. The Kingdom is not something formulated by theologians; it is something lived out every hour

by the followers of Christ on the highway of human life.

The fact is, Christianity is every day in the making. It is never complete. It is, indeed, never a fact till it becomes flesh in the daily lives of men. It has always been crimsoned from the hour of Calvary down to the present. There is no Christianity without the blood of Christ. Neither is there any Christianity without the blood of men. Oh that this primary law of all human experience were imprinted upon the table stones of every Christian conscience! What a dynamic verity the Christian religion would at once become to unnumbered souls over all the world. "Ye shall *see* the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There it is. Do you behold it? When we see the truth, freedom follows. Truth that we see is truth that we know by actual experience. And there is no other truth. Truth is an incarnate living personal force. That is why Jesus said, "I am the * * * truth."

Herein lies the gulf that separates what we term actual and nominal Christians. Ask one hundred: "Do you believe in Christ?" and ninety-five of them will answer, "Yes." Ask them, "Are you living in actual personal union with Him?" and you will have few such answers. Their belief is not made flesh, and, therefore, is not a governing power in their lives. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall inherit the kingdom

of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of the Father." A prominent theologian recently declared that Christianity was a revelation of the saving power of God in Christ. A mistake. A Christian is such a revelation, but not Christianity. Till Christianity becomes flesh in the daily life of Christ's followers, it is just an echo, a picture, a mere statement. We hear a great deal these days about the historicity of the Scriptures. The fact is that until the Scriptures become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh they are but the annals of history. But, when they become vitalized into the tissue of our being, they become the veritable Word of God. A metabolism has taken place. The words of men become the Word of God. The Bible is not the same book to the man who neglects it as it is to the man who absorbs it into his daily life. Food is not the same thing to the man who does not eat it as it is to the man who does eat it. To the one it is a mere vegetable composition, useless and valueless to him. To the other it is a life-force in every blood cell of his body. The Bible is but a mere composition of words and ideals, useless and valueless till it is absorbed and assimilated into the tissue of the soul. When so received, it becomes a spiritual life force, transforming and directing the conduct of our daily affairs. Yes. There is no Word of God in the world to anyone but the man to whom the Bible has become flesh and bone and nerve and muscle. You can accept the Bible,

you cannot accept the Word of God. You can carry the Bible around in your pocket, but not the Word of God. You can commit the Bible to memory, but you can't memorize the Word of God. You do not remember the Word of God, you live it. You cannot analyze the Word of God; you breathe it. You cannot dogmatize the Word of God; you absorb it. It does not exist; it lives. It is the written voice of the Spirit made flesh. What are the Scriptures to you? The Bible or the Word of God? Your answer to this question is the answer to the worth of the Christian Religion to you.

In this most practical of all ages, when shall we learn the glory of this most practical of all subjects—the religion of our blessed Master? When we have learned it by experience. Only then shall we know the meaning of Christianity. When once the fact, for example, that God is our Father and that He has numbered the hairs of our heads becomes part of our very flesh and bone, then shall be past the day of our anxiety and sorrow. How intensely concrete Jesus was when He thus said, "Take no thought for the morrow." That meant our faith was to be clothed in the flesh. He meant that thus it should take the weakness from our nerves, the fear from our hearts, and the sorrow from our souls. And then, when He talked about the final day of reckoning, how utterly concrete He was. Those to whom the door was open were not

those who merely held a belief and executed a worship. It was to those whose religion had taken on the flesh. It had become transformed into words and deeds of love and mercy. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

As a conclusion to this subject it may well be said that human experience is but one long protracted parturition. With a master stroke one of our leading writers recently declared, "Humanity is pierced with such pains as never before * * * Democracy * * * is about to give birth to the heir of all the ages." The birth of World Democracy is taking place. Every strike and strife is a labour pain that ushers in the day when world peace shall be incarnate forever. Above all the din and sorrow of to-day, can you not hear the laughter of the beautiful child of to-morrow? Then the sword shall be sheathed and the fires of good-will shall burn forever upon the altar of universal brotherhood. Soon democracy, the glory of civilization, will walk about the streets of every land clothed in the beautiful garments of common brotherhood. So be patient and bear up and on till this great hour of the Lord be fulfilled. It is conceived of the Holy Spirit of all history. It has been maturing silent and unseen during all the ages since God breathed man into existence upon the earth. Nothing can stay it. Eternal necessity is behind it. Universal law demands it. The

Spirit of the Prince of Peace has long been taking on the form of men. Soon it will walk about incarnated in every human breast in every nation under the shining sun.

And so it is with every other problem of human life. Prohibition was conceived long ago. Yesterday we were in the labour struggle of delivery. To-day it is born—National Prohibition. And soon sobriety will be incarnated in every American within our bounds. What a glorious advent!

Then the vexing question of Capital and Labour. Just yet we cannot see the solution. But, mark my word, it is being formed in the hidden soul of civilization. It is gradually becoming flesh, and when the hour comes—as come it will—a beautiful industrial child will be born. The Golden Rule will have become flesh. O Democracy of Christ, be thou of goodly cheer! The day of thy great joy is coming fast! Behold upon thy breast thy newborn son, beautiful and kingly, radiant and strong, in features like unto the Son of God! Then in thy joy shall thine agony be forgotten and then thine anguish shall be but a memory.

Carry this principle of incarnation into every question that occupies your mind. You will find it has a message for you now. Are you vexed about the oppressions, the injustices, the meannesses, the mysteries of life? Don't worry. They are all being solved and remedied. The New Era is gradually taking on the form of flesh. And one day it

will be full-born in the natural flesh and blood of society. When the Millennium will come, God only knows. But we all know that it is on the way. It is foolish to stop and figure about it; it is wise to roll up our sleeves and help to usher it in. Nothing can stop its coming. Just as the Spirit of Jesus becomes flesh and dwells in the breasts of men, so will the Millennium come.

X

GOD'S CLOSED DOORS

"Thou shalt shut the door upon thee."—II KINGS 4:4.

TWO scenes appear before us at this moment. One is in the Old Testament. A widow is in great need. Her husband left her with very little. She has two sons. Debts pile up against her. She is unable to meet them. Her creditors press her. They threaten to take away her sons as bondsmen. One day, when hope was all but gone, she meets Elisha and tells him all about her troubles. "What have you in your house?" he asked. "Nothing," was the sad reply—"not a thing. The bread and the meat and the milk and the meal are all gone. There's not a morsel left. O, yes, I forgot to mention there's a wee cruse of oil up yonder on the shelf that I keep for the boys when their skin is burnt by the scorching sun. But that's all."

"Well," said the prophet, "Go and get all the vessels you can scare up. Borrow of every neighbour. Borrow not a few, but many."

What a strange thing to ask her to do? Didn't it seem perfect nonsense? Borrowing empty vessels and nothing to put into them! But good brave

woman she was, she did what the spokesman for God told her to do, strange as it seemed. Ah, yes, sometimes the Lord seems to require of us duties that seem altogether unreasonable to our poor finite minds. But wait. He has something in store we know not of. So, just let us do what He wants us to do, "nor murmur or repine."

But the hardest test was still to come. "Go in and shut the door," said Elisha. Now just think of what this meant. She was to go in and shut the door against God's skies and fields and gardens, with only empty vessels and a little cruse of oil. But, once more, faithful soul, she obeys. Her two hungry boys by her side, she slowly and quietly, but resolutely, closes the door. And there they are closed in with empty vessels and nothing to eat. No fussing, nor complaining: I don't hear her saying, "Dear me, why didn't I ask the prophet to wait till I made one more attempt by asking rich old Benjamin Joash to loan me a few pennies." No, she goes right in and closes the door. And now she and her two precious boys are alone with God and the empty jars.

And now what happened? In obedience to the word of the prophet, she began to pour in her little oil into one of the vessels. She kept on pouring out till the vessel was filled, and until all the vessels were filled. Then to her son she said, "Bring me yet another vessel." "Mother," he replied, "there isn't another vessel." What a scene! What an

experience! What a lesson for her and all generations that followed her.

Then, in the flush of gratitude, the widow hastened to tell the prophet all about it. "Go," said he, "sell the oil, pay thy debt, and with the balance live thou with thy sons." And so is told one of the sublimest stories of the Lord's timely providence.

There was a secret to all this wondrous gift of God to this needy and wearied child of His. It was the closed door. She must needs go in and shut the door, and alone with the Lord wait His miracle of plenty.

Jesus had delivered His Sermon on the Mount. The multitudes were amazed at the words that proceeded from His lips. Among other things, He taught them the inner meaning of prayer. He told them how to pray with the greatest power. And the secret of this blessing was the closed door. "When thou prayest," He said, "enter into thine inner chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father." And then He added, "Thy Father shall reward thee openly." Yes, but I can hear Him declare, "You must close the door." And, if you will examine the original word Jesus used, you will find that He said "fastened" as well as "closed." "Fasten, lock, so that, though someone try to open it, he shall not succeed, it will remain shut."

Yes, there are times when we must be alone with the Father, with all the world shut out. Many a

time, for this very reason, have I locked my study door. And people have knocked and gone away thinking I was not in. It would have been to me a sacrilege to have admitted them just at that moment.

But more. God has doors in our lives all along the way—doors which He has bidden us enter and close forever. They are His Closed Doors. And they must not be opened.

A few years ago, Mr. Lloyd George and a friend of his played a game of golf on an upland English meadow. On their way home they passed through fields where cattle grazed. The friend left one of the gates open, whereupon the Premier turned and closed it. His friend apologized. "O, it's all right," replied the great statesman, "but it reminds me of Dr. Julius Smith. When the old man was on his death-bed, his minister asked him whether he had any message or word of preparation to speak. 'No,' said the doctor, 'I think I have always closed the gates behind me.'" F. W. Boreham, that interesting Tasmanian essayist, in his volume, "The Silver Shadow," tells of a little aged parishioner of his who had passed through untold sorrow and trial. On being asked by Mr. Boreham the secret of his Christian calmness, he replied he had all through his life taken as his motto, "When I've shut the door, I've shut the door."

It is surely a principle wherewith to rule our

daily walk, that when God calls us to go in and close the door, we should do so, but especially should we keep the door closed until He tells us to open. Forgetting this, we may miss God's filled vessels.

Did you ever stop to think just how foolish we are about a lot of these things? I can see some of you lock your safe, then lock your office door, and finally, before you retire, lock your front, side and rear doors. And as slumber is gently closing your eyes, your wife suddenly remembers that possibly the rear window was not barred. Half-assured yourself, you still assure her that it is locked. And yet, all the while, anyone so disposed could have entered your home unobstructed through one or two windows that remain unfastened the year round. The point is just this, we lock our safes and houses to keep the outside obtruding world away from us and our treasures. We close these doors as we ought so to do. But not long afterward, we open them. Soon after returning home from the office, we begin to open in our minds the ledger and sales-book which an hour before we put securely away in the safe. Soon after our heads touch the pillow, we begin to go over some piece of business for the next day, with a man in a neighbouring town. And yet a few moments before we barred out every person in that town from entering the house. Yet there is that man—mentally, there he is—sitting on the bed beside you, and you are doing business with him, when all the while God and the Universe or-

ders you to keep the door closed against him and start charging up your body and brain and heart for the next day.

When I was a child, many times did my good mother say to me, "Robert, will you ever learn to close the door after you?" And, in the larger sense, I have not yet really learned to do it. And yet, long ago I realized that much of my ministry should be spent in trying to keep folk from opening God's closed doors. Leading men of the ages have given themselves to this worthy task. I think, for example, of Wordsworth. When the Napoleonic War broke out in 1793, he wrote his first poem. This was the beginning of his many closed-door messages to the war-riven people of England and Europe. Amid the death struggles of Napoleon and Wellington, when the empire trembled in the balance, the great English poet sang of the cuckoo and the nightingale, the robin and the linnet, the meadow and the stream. What was this but an attempt to keep closed the war door with its distressing scenes of pain and death?

Let us look at some of these closed doors of the Lord. I hear a knock—Who's there?—"Just a friend to tell you *what you might have been.*" Your visitor quotes: "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these—it might have been." Well, yes, I might have been a Lincoln. But I'm not—and what's the use of talking about it? The buttercup might have been a rose—but it isn't.

And finally heaven looks down and says, "I want a buttercup just where a buttercup is growing." And that's the blessed end of my worry about not being what I might have been. So, henceforth, that door remains closed.

Another knock—there it goes again. Who's there this time? There steps in a friend to tell me something he has just heard about that *trouble* I had with Mr. and Mrs. Jones, neighbours of mine. I tell him that it is all past. But he assures me it isn't. He has heard something new about it. Yes, the British treated us rather badly nearly a century and a half ago. But that is all over, and the door was closed long ago. Why open it again? It would do no good, and it is certain it would do harm. That neighbour-trouble was settled months ago. The family episode was past a year ago. The door was closed, and without a shadow of a doubt, God intends it to stay closed. Then, why open it? It would only violate a life-principle. It is a similar law that is at work in the physical world. You are wounded. The wound heals. What does that mean? It means that Nature has closed the door against the injury. Now, just try to open the wound, and you will soon see how vitally you have violated a primary law of Nature. Yes, when God closes a door, we suffer when we attempt to open it. For example, this is the fundamental cause of the present Irish trouble, trying to open a door of history that was closed more than a century ago.

Another knock. What is it this time? *Fear.* It is early in the morning. You have just arisen. And you are not feeling very well. This visitor wants to recall to you that sickness you had a year ago. He tells you that the article of Dr. Brady's you read the evening before in the *Buffalo News* on Cancer really should concern you. In fact, your symptoms look just like the beginning of that disease. And he reminds you that your dear grandmother died of the same malady. Yes, there's some truth in all this. But there are five hundred chances to one that they do not apply to your condition more than to the man in Mars. Close the door on fear, this arch-enemy of the human heart. Let him in, and, like an invisible moth, he will eat away the hidden fibre of your soul's strength and happiness. Somewhere the other day, I came across these lines:

"I have closed the door on Fear,
He has lived with me far too long,
Were he to knock and speak and reappear,
I would lift my eye, and look at the sky,
And sing aloud, and run lightly by;
For he'll never follow a song."

Still another knock. What is it this time? *Discontent.* He stands there waiting to get in to tell you how he sympathizes with you over your circumstances in life. How sorry he is for you that there are so many things you might have, but which you haven't. It's altogether too bad.

But wait. Tell me, after all, just what would

make you really content and happy. Did you ever look up the meaning of that word "happy"? Well, its real meaning is told by a prominent writer. It is this: "Having what you never have." That's it exactly. We are discontent with what we have, and when we get what we long for we are discontent till we get something more. Just as it was with Alexander the Great. He conquered one city, and another, and still he was discontented. Finally, he conquered the world, and then wept because there was no other world to conquer. That's the way of the human soul; all the things of time and sense can never satisfy it: it is too high and too deep to ever be filled with anything material. We see this very early in life. How soon we observe that childhood is really never satisfied. One day I took my little boy down town on his birthday, and gave him about everything his heart could desire. On the way home he put his arm around my neck, kissed me, and said, "Daddie, this is the best time I've ever had." I was glad in the thought that he was perfectly satisfied. But no sooner had I thought it, than he whispered, "an ice-cream cone would be fine now." And you know, we are all largely children yet.

You think you would be perfectly satisfied, if you had a fine house, like the Smiths, or a Packard, like the Browns. But you wouldn't. Mr. Gladstone realized this, and one day, after he stood looking into a store window, he turned to his friend,

and remarked, "I am happy." "Why are you happy?" asked his companion. "I am happy," replied the great statesman, "that there are so many things in this world I don't need in order to make me satisfied." So, what you now have seems to be God's closed door. Until He opens it and leads you into a room of larger gifts, in sweet contentment keep it closed.

And yet another knock. How many are the travelers that stop to enter doors that are not to be opened? And here is another of them. This time it is SIN. He wants to remind you of those sins you've committed, especially that "Great transgression." You fought that thing out long ago. You took it a score of times to the Lord in prayer. You passed through a long night of remorse and penitence. And finally the day of peace dawned. Since then it has been a closed matter between you and the Father. And now this intruder would have you open the door again. Don't do it. If you do, you'll sin against the redeeming love of God. You will violate the everlasting atonement wrought out for you by the Saviour of all the earth.

That is God's way. When He shuts the door, He shuts the door. That's why He sent Jesus into the world that men might know His *everlasting* forgiveness and righteousness. Jesus called it *Eternal* Life.

What was the Cross but God's door clanged shut forever against our sin. It shut us in with

God, and all sin was left without. And why was the veil of the temple rent in twain from the top to the bottom? Because never again was there to be anything that would separate men from direct communion with God. We were then admitted into the immediate presence of God with sins forgiven and complete restoration into perfect one-ness with Him forever. That the veil, the symbol of our separateness from Him, was completely rent, means that the door of forgiveness and restoration was closed forever. Not long ago a man with a breaking heart came to see me. He had grievously sinned. And it seemed to him that his future was completely undone. He was very penitent. He had asked the Lord by night and day to forgive him. And yet he was disconsolate. I assured him that God had entirely forgiven him, and that the incident, in the sight of the Father of men, was closed. I then proceeded to show him that the Lord was now concerned only about his future. That "Go, and sin no more" was His message now. "Cut out the past," I said, "and make good in the future." As if a light from Heaven shot through his soul, he jumped to his feet, took his hat, clasped my hand, and, with radiant resolve in every line of his face, he exclaimed, "Thank you, thank you, I see it all. God has closed the matter, and I have kept it open. I must keep my eyes and feet toward future success." In a moment he was gone. The last word I received from him was one of thanks

for that vision of God's closed door of forgiveness and to say that from that moment he had known nothing but success.

One more knock. Who is it this time? *Sorrow.* Come in and sit down, for I am always ready to talk with anyone who is interested in my sorrow. But before my visitor leaves, strange doubts hang like a morning mist above my head. My heart has lost its peace. And I am altogether disquieted. And why should I be so troubled? For, months ago I gave my dear one back to the arms of her Saviour whom she always loved and served. And ever since then a peculiar peace dwelt in my heart. But now it is disturbed. And I am wondering whether there really is a future life, and whether we really ever shall be with our dear ones again. Ah, I opened God's closed door of immortality. Even Jesus never tried to open it. He just took it for granted, and talked about it. And you know that nineteen centuries ago Jesus forever sealed the door against death when He rose from the tomb. Death had been as a poisonous reptile to the human race. But now the fang is taken out of it. And so Paul exclaimed, "O death, where is thy sting?" It is gone forever. And now we sing with the apostle:

"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

One more scene. The soldiers were waiting to put our Saviour to death. The Cross was not far

off. Jesus entered the garden, and fell on His face "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Now note His prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and then He added, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Then He arose and went to His disciples. He returned. Again He returned for the last time to the disciples and said these significant words, "the hour is come * * * arise, let us be going." What had God revealed to Him? Listen, as down over the hills of time the Master whispers it to us—God's door of Christ's atoning death was closed from that moment when man first sinned. Yes, for we read He was "slain from the foundation of the world." It was therefore impossible to open it. For "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." That's why Jesus declared he "*must needs suffer.*" It was God's closed redemptive door that no man, not even Jesus, could open. It *must* be done; men must be saved. Jesus *must* die. And now He says, "follow me." So when God's door of death or trial of any kind is closed, don't try to open it. Like the Master, when you find it cannot be opened, arise and take up your cross.

Open Doors Ahead

And do not overlook the truth—the important fact—in the story of our text, that finally God opens up another greater door than He closes.

The prophet told the widow to go out and sell

her oil, pay her debts and on the remainder live, she and her family, in plenty. So just keep in mind that beyond God's closed doors of to-day, He has far better open doors for to-morrow.

Then whatever door God bids us enter, let us enter it, without a murmur. And when He shuts the door, let us be careful not to open till He bids us do it. And let us remember that, in the recess of His Loving Father-heart, He has for us new open doors, through which, in His own appointed time and way, we shall enter into the treasury of His "unsearchable riches." For—

"Whatever comes each passing day,
Whatever comes along my way,
Somewhere, in God's great treasure room,
He holds for me rich gifts in store,
If I enter in,—and *close the door*."

XI

GOD'S TWELVE GATES

"On the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."—REVELATION 21:13.

THE City of God with its gates could be seen by John only from a great eminence. The apostle says, "He carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem." We note further the help of the Holy Spirit was also required. "He carried me away in the Spirit." With such conditions before us, may the Spirit of the Lord lead us up sufficiently high to catch a glimpse of the walls of the Holy City.

First, let us see the importance of the gates in early days. They were the places of public resort. It was at the gates the people met for business and social intercourse. We read that "Lot sat in the *gate* of Sodom"; that "Ephron answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth at the *gate* of his city"; that "Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel at the *gate* of the city"; that Ezra "read the law to the people gathered together into the broad place before the *gate*." The gates were also used for the administration of justice and for

the audience of kings. We read, "The * * * rebellious son is to be brought before the elders of the city at the gates"; that, "King David sat in the *gate,* and the people came before him"; that "the kings of Israel and Judah sat in an open place at the entrance of the *gate* of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them." Moreover, the gate was the only point through which the enemy gained an entrance. It was also the only point through which a citizen or refugee could gain admittance. Its importance in ancient days is therefore hard to overestimate. The gate seemed to stand for all for which the city stood. It seemed to be the very entrance way into the presence of Jehovah. "O, enter into His *gates* with praise," says the Psalmist. Listen to Jacob at Bethel, "This is none other than the house of God * * * the *gate* of heaven." We read of "The gates of righteousness"; "The gates of Jehovah"; "The gates of death"; "the gates of the grave"; "the gates of Hades."

The gates stood for strength, for power, for dominion, for salvation, and for praise. "Thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy *gates* praise." And then the Doxology of the Psalmist—"Lift up your heads, O ye *gates,* and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory will come in."

This City of God is the "New Heaven and New Earth," wherein dwelleth righteousness, "coming down out of heaven from God," and "Having the

glory of God." It seems to be the kingdom of God about which Jesus so often spoke, and which He came to establish among the sons of men. It has four walls, facing respectively,—East, North, West and South. And each wall possesses three gates. Let us now examine these gates with the purpose of ascertaining the significance of each as a means of entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

"On the *East* three gates." The East stood for the rising of the sun—*light, wisdom.* Did not the wise men come from the East? Was not the East the direction of learning, knowledge, intelligence, truth? It thus stood for the fear of God, the beginning of wisdom; for the one who is the Light of the world, and on account of whom heaven needs no sun. The first to greet His advent were men from the East. He was the embodiment of truth. "I am the * * * truth," he declared. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Through this gate we must enter into the kingdom. "I am the door," "the way," the gate, He said. Over and over again He emphasized the necessity of passing through this gate.

The East also stood for *the throne, the dwelling-place, of Jehovah.* Three times a day Daniel lifted his window toward the East and prayed with his face in that direction. This gate of prayer is essential. It is difficult to understand how the Kingdom of God can be entered without prayer. Jesus declared, "Men ought at all times to pray." Paul

exhorted the early Christians to "pray without ceasing." The thief of the cross entered Paradise on the wings of prayer. Even Jesus Himself on the Cross, after completing His redemptive sacrifice, passed through the gate of prayer, into the hands of the Father. We pass through this gate into the kingdom of health. Not long since a physician's wife requested me to pray as she passed under the influence of the anaesthetic. She came forth in health. We pass through the gate of prayer into the realm of democracy. Cromwell and his cavaliers established the imperial glory of British democracy on the rock foundation of prayer. On the morning of the decisive battle of the American Revolutionary War, Washington was nowhere to be seen. After much search he was found at a distance behind a clump of trees in prayer for "the coming of the Lord." Lord Roberts, in the early days of the war, warned England the war could not be won till we got on our knees. Admiral Beattie, during the recent war declared, "When we pray as we ought, the days can be counted when victory will be ours." "Somehow," wrote one of our boys at the front, "when we realize that thousands at home are praying for us, we can go 'over the top' without a flinch." Yes, we must enter the kingdom of universal peace by way of the gate of prayer. The first thing for which Jesus told us to pray was the coming of the Kingdom—"Thy Kingdom come."

The third East gate is the gate of *Service.* The morning sun calls to work. The night has gone, rest is over and now for work. The man who lies down at this gate and refuses to enter, will never know the blessedness of living. No work, no pay; no work, no food; no work, no play; no work, no rest; no work, no salvation. "*Work* out your salvation." "Go *work* in my vineyard," said the Master. And it must be a service for *others.* This gate is ministerial, not magisterial. Over it hangs the insignia, "Bear ye one another's burdens." It is the gate of altruism. Unless we enter this gate, there is no Kingdom of Heaven for us. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Thus the three East gates—Wisdom, Prayer and Service.

Now—the *North* gate. This gate spoke to the ancients of the blighting, barren, bitter cold. "Out of the chamber cometh the * * * cold out of the North." This is the first North gate of *poverty or want.* Strangely true, yet true it is, that often we are called to walk the way of God through this gate. The other day a prominent journalist in New York City refused to walk the way and chose the short road of suicide. Yet it is on the whole easier to enter this gate than the gateway of riches. Jesus remarked how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom. But He had no such word about the poor man. Sometimes the Lord keeps us poor in earthly possession that He may keep us rich in

heavenly treasures. Sometimes He strips us of our wealth that He may strip us of our indifference. If your lot has been one of recurring need, do not repine, for it is likely the gate by which God intends you to enter His realm.

Then there is the North gate of *bereavement or loss.* We wonder betimes why so much sorrow is permitted to overtake us. There seems to be no purpose to it. Every hour we ask, "How can these things be?" And sooner or later every soul passes through this gate. Sooner or later every one passes into his Gethsemane and finds it impossible that the cup should pass from him. It is the gateway that leads finally beyond the cross to the crown. It has its own peculiar reward. "These are they that came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Jesus warned his disciples that in this world they would have much trial, but he added, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." This is one of God's pearly gates: don't fear to enter it. Its pathway leads straight up to the right hand of the Father. The way is dark and steep, but it is always straight toward the heart of Heaven. When the mists have rolled away, and you can look backward down the darksome way, you will see that the loss of that member of your family has been but one of the Master's jewelled gates through which you and yours have but passed into a "far more exceeding

and eternal weight of glory." One of our great writers tells of a saintly old aunt of his whose life was a volume of sorrow. In her late years she took delight in telling of the element of joy there was to be found in all sorrow. The Master of men Himself passed through this gateway of sorrows—"for the joy that was set before Him."

Sickness may be regarded as the third gate of the blighting North. How illness transforms. It changes the colour of everything it touches. It drives away the smile and fills the heart with fear. Our outlook is beclouded and our spirit is depressed. Strength fails and life's fountain seems as if to fail. After all, it is another of God's gates of pearl. How many have entered into the glory of Heaven through this gate. A few days ago I entered a room where a man lay ill. Rarely have I visited a home where the Spirit of the Lord seemed so imminent. On leaving the house, I remarked to the daughter how specially near seemed the Divine Presence. "Yes," she replied, "and it has all come since father took sick." Up till a few months before, he had lived an honest, but unspiritual life. A few weeks ago I visited what was to me a home from heaven sent down. There lay upon the bed a man of fifty. He was the nearest approach to the Master's soul I ever hope to meet on earth. His presence breathed a divineness not his own. I wondered what the secret was. Soon I asked him how long he had lain there, and, with a

smile that lighted the room, he said, "*Thirty-one years.*" His answer told the secret. Passing through this third North gate of sickness, he became an angel clothed in the flesh.

And now the three gates of the *West.* The West spoke to the early people, as it does to us, of the setting of the sun. The first is the gate of *rest,*—"Rest at eventide." In the morning we went out through an Eastern gate. But in the evening we return through a Western gate—the gate of rest. And, remember this is just as truly one of God's gates into His Kingdom as is the gate of work. "He giveth his beloved sleep." We are apt to overlook the sacred duty of rest. Heaven has ordained that we should sleep nearly one-third of our natural lives on earth. Yet all the time we are entering through this gate into the Kingdom of Heaven. Too many are failing to enter this gateway, and the result is a nation of neurotics, a physically undermined citizenship. Perhaps there never was a time when so many were overworking. And never a time when so many were breaking under the strain of daily work. Not long since, a woman asked me to call and see her husband. She felt she was losing her husband and home, and all for some unaccountable reason. I soon detected the cause. Her husband was working nights and Sundays, and had taken no vacation in two years. I advised an immediate vacation, the stopping of night and Sunday work, and regular attendance on at least one of

the Sabbath Services. All these were followed. Within a month his health was restored and the home renewed. It required only ordinary sense to effect the cure. But strange to say, like tens of thousands of others, that intelligent couple did not know wherein lay the cause, or, if they did know, they failed to heed it.

Then there is the second Western gate,—the gate of *death*. To the ancients the West was the waste of the great unknown beyond the scan of eye. Our soldiers spoke of *dying* as "Going West." Going West with the setting sun, but only to rise again with the rising sun on the other side of life. This gate must be entered. It cannot be avoided, if we would enter God's new city. "It is appointed unto man once to die." But then think of the triumph of this appointment. Jesus, the Prince over death, declares, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." He holds the keys to the gate. He is Master of it. He bids us enter. And as we enter, He bestows his "blessed" upon our brows. He whispers, "Fear not. * * * I have the keys of death." It is the gate of pearl through which we pass on from this sin-sick, war-stricken earth into the New Earth within which dwells neither sin nor sorrow. What a precious gate—swinging open upon its jewelled hinges for those who hear God's "one clear call." It is the gateway that leads straight upward into the arms of the Master of life and death.

During these after-war days, we are talking much of reconstruction. International relations must be reconstructed; capital and labour must be reconstructed; philosophy and religion must be reconstructed. And so we go on all along the line of life's activities. But among all these, one of the most urgent needs, growing out of the war, is the reconstructing of our ideas of *death.* Death can never be to us what it once was—a fearsome calamity. Henceforth, it must be regarded as one of God's gateways into the glory of His Kingdom in heaven. We look across the sea to the unnumbered mounds beneath the shadow of the little white crucifixes. And from the silence of each we can hear the vicarious whisper as of old—"This is my body which is broken for you." Yes, death has come to its own. It has become to us a gateway into a larger and fuller life, into a greater and better citizenship, into a higher and sublimer service. Blessed be the Lord for this second gateway of the West.

Then there is the third gate in the West. It is the gate of *reward.* After the work of the day—the sunset—and then the reward. To the Jew this pay-time was an extremely important part of the day. You remember how Jesus tells us of the steward who, when the even was come, called the labourers and paid them their hire. He did not wait until the end of the week or the month. So to the Jew the West spoke of compensation. In a larger way it speaks to us all. To His disciples

Jesus said, that they would have much to do; that there would be much hardship to endure; and that sore trial would come upon them in their work. But He bade them be of good cheer; He counseled them as to the priceless reward that lay beyond their toil and trial. He pointed out to them this gate beset with the pearls of rich reward. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," said He, "for great is your reward in heaven." Often the clouds of trial hide from us this precious gate of compensation. And it takes the eye of faith to penetrate the mist. And just here is where we too often fail. We confront our troubles but have not faith sufficient to see the reward that awaits us a little way ahead. The very essence of life is compensative. God has made it on this plan. For God himself is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He has made His world machinery on the plan that "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." While the chief end of man is to glorify God forever, the chief end of the Father of men, so far as He has revealed Himself to us, is to glorify His children everywhere. See Him wherever and whenever you will, and "Behold, His reward is with Him." Glorious third gate of the West—keep it ever before you, and strive to enter it.

Finally, the fourth way.—The wall with its gates toward the *South*. To the minds of all ages the South has always spoken of beautiful *gardens, trees*

and flowers. It is in the Southland that we find Nature clothed in her sublimest beauty. The first gate in this Southern wall might, therefore, be called the gate *Beautiful.* Happy the man who passes through it. For in so doing there is opened to him a glory of the Lord that is never seen on land or sea. It is through this gate we must pass, if we are to see the King in His beauty. If you would enter into the beauty of holiness, you must pass through this gate. O, how much of God's splendour is hidden from the eyes of men, because we fail to enter the Kingdom through this gateway of the beautiful. What the Psalmist would have missed had he not considered God's heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars which He ordained. How poor would have been our world had Jesus failed to see the glory of the Father in the lilies of the field.

The second gate in the South wall,—the gate of *prosperity.* Down in the sunny South waved the fields of corn and wine. Up from the prosperous South came the treasures of old, full and many. It is a good thing to be rich, provided our riches lead us upward. God has always intended some to be rich. And it has always been His purpose that such prosperity should be a gate of pearl through which men should enter into His presence and fulfill His highest will. Jesus never condemned the rich; He pitied them. He pitied them because they allowed their riches to lead them away

from his Kingdom, whereas they were intended to be a gateway through which they might enter into the Kingdom.

Many are standing to-day as never before in the gateway of prosperity. They have health, plenty and happiness to an extent never before experienced. But what a tragedy that so many are enjoying it for only a little while outside the city walls. They have found no gateway by which to enter with their prosperity. A clarion call goes out from every mountain top to-day to men of means—to consecrate their prosperity to the ushering in of the Kingdom far and near. So bring your treasures new and old into the City of God. No man owns a dollar. He is just its steward. Invest it for the Giver and His Kingdom here, that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Men are sick, help them; they are in prison, visit them; they are hungry, feed them; they are naked, clothe them; they are drifting, save them. Everywhere the angels of Heaven are calling for money to establish the Rule of the King of Kings upon the earth. They have thrown wide open the gates of riches, health and prosperity as never before. And they bid you enter through it into the Kingdom of Heaven with every gift you have. They seem to tell us that over this gateway is inscribed the lines:

"I gave my life for thee.
What hast thou given for me?"

The last South gate has the significance of liberty. Listen to the Psalmist pleading for his captive people, "Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah, as streams in the South." Here we seem to have war and liberty coming from the South. I wonder whether Jesus had any thought of this when he spoke of the "wars and rumours of wars," and then his reign of peace and good-will over all the earth. At any rate history tells the story over and over again of first whirlwind and then liberty.

These twelve gates are all united within the four walls of the one great City of God. Questions of race, or creed, or class are not asked of those who enter. Side by side they enter, rich and poor, learned and unlettered, the classes and the masses. They are no respecter of persons, these gates of God. They regard not the petty distinctions that have so long divided the visible Church of Christ. Somehow the various branches of the Church have come to realize as never before that they are but different gateways into the Kingdom. Everywhere throughout the country communions are coming together. We are learning that all the gates belong to the four walls of the self-same City of God. When we have entered these gates, we shall find that after all our differences are left behind, that we are children of one common Father, servants of the one King of Kings, and brothers one of another. Then, waiving more and more our non-essential differences, let us lift our eyes to the hills

to the New Kingdom coming down from God out of heaven. Let us gird our loins for every duty and seek to "enter into His gates with praise."

The glory that waits us within the City of God passes all our present understanding. It is possible to enter most of these gates and know their blessedness, even while yet upon this earth. Then let us enter them at once. Why live longer outside the walls of God's great Kingdom City? Why not enter at once through absolute consecration to Him, who is the Way—the Door? And God shall begin at once to tabernacle with us and to wipe away all tears from our eyes. And also lead others after us. For as John wrote, "They shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

XII

HOW TO PRAY

"Lord, teach us to pray."—LUKE 11:1.

THERE was something peculiarly magnetic about Jesus when he returned from prayer. So the disciples, seeing this, made the great request of our text. Perhaps they observed in Him an extraordinary serenity, or a resolute calmness of some kind. Or, possibly, His face bore still the radiance of His mountain fellowship with the Father. In any event, He impressed the disciples with the beauty, the joy and the strength of His praying, such as they did not possess. And now they seek His help—"Lord, teach us to pray."

There is a way to pray. Shall we call it the art of praying? Or shall we term it the science of prayer? It matters little. It is sufficient to say that our prayers are successful largely according to *how* we pray.

To know how to pray, let us first ask what prayer is. Looking back over the pages of Holy Writ, we find the first instance of prayer is spoken as *calling* upon the Lord. It was when, at the command of God, Abraham went out from Ur of the Chaldees,

not knowing whither he went. We read that when the shades of night closed in about him, he pitched his tent, "and there he builded an altar * * * and *called upon the name of the Lord.*" It was just the far call of his inmost soul to the One whose inner voice in him he was now obeying. It was the response of his deepest intuition—the simple deep of his soul calling to its God-filled deep. And after all, this is the only kind of prayer there is in its last analysis. It's the root from which has sprung all true prayer from the most primitive to the most modern days.

This Call in Prayer sometimes takes the form of a *Cry.* Hear the Psalmist no less than twenty-three times telling us how he *cried* unto the Lord. "In my distress," he says, "I cried unto the Lord, and He answered me." How often sorrow, like a flood, overwhelms us, and we have no language but a cry.

"So runs my dream: but what am I
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry."

The world understands not the cry of the infant, but the mother does. It is perfectly plain to her and she knows the language of the cry. The world may not know the meaning of our heart's deepest cry. But the soft mother heart of Heaven knows all about it. He understands the cry of His child and answers the need. Not long since, I stood be-

side the bed upon which lay the devoted dying wife of one of my officials. Soon her spirit took its trackless flight, and he was left alone, benumbed. Suddenly, he fled from the room with the wails of a broken heart—with no language but a *cry*. The next day, with soul composed, he remarked to me, "Yes, my heart was torn, but the Lord heard my cry, so that now I can take up my cross."

What was the Garden prayer of Christ but the solemn cry of His burdened heart? But how it was answered when with intrepid foot, He went forth and bore His Cross to victory! Yes, my friends, your trial may so paralyze your tongue that words fail you, and only a cry is left. But so sure as you are living, the Great Father heart hears the prayer of your cry to Him, and in His love, He will answer it as truly as if it had been clothed in the sublimest of words.

Sometimes prayer is the *seeking after the forgiveness and favour of God.* When ancient guilty peoples entered the presence of their kings, ofttimes the faces of their monarchs were turned away in anger and displeasure. Humbly and slowly they went forth toward the thrones of their majesties. Whereupon, on reaching the throne, each subject kneeling and stretching his hands gently stroked the face of the offended sovereign, till it pleased him to turn his face again in forgiveness and favour. This is the Psalmist's picture of prayer

when he declares, "Thy face, O Lord, will I seek; hide not Thy face from me."

How often, when we approach God in prayer, it seems as if His face were turned from us. How little seems the sense of response or fellowship. And yet, can we wonder why? Think of the thousand things we did during the day that we ought not to have done and the hundred things we left undone that it was our duty to have done. Then we cease to wonder that our sin-hating God and Father should seem to turn His face from us, till we have humbly repented of our offenses against Him.

Prayer is not a matter of words. It is an *experience*. It is an experience before God. To give a definition of prayer is almost impossible. For prayer far transcends the touch of words. Perhaps, however, an illustration will help us. Many of us have at one time or another stood beside the lifeless form of a dear one. And the tear trickled down our cheeks. Why? Not because the eyes were closed and the lips were silent and the hands were still. No. It was for the reason that when we spoke, there was no response: when we lifted the hand, it fell back as it was. In other words, the communion ties of love were severed, and we seemed to be left alone. After all, the sorrow of bereavement is in the last analysis the sorrow of loneliness. The sense of fellowship is broken. And all this goes down far below the reach of

human words. On the other hand, we all know the joy of companionship with our dear ones. Wives and husbands, you know the joy that fills your heart when you sit together in your homes in the eventide; when perhaps not a word is spoken. Mothers and fathers, you know the joy of the reunion with your children from day to day and from time to time. Sons and daughters, you know the joy of entering into the presence of your parents. What is all this joy but the spoken or unspoken communion of kindred spirits one with the other? And how far it transcends human words. So is it with prayer. It is communion of the spirit of the creature with the Spirit of the Creator; the Spirit of God with the spirit of man; the Spirit of the Father with the spirit of His child. You can't define it; you can't explain it. It is an experience of the soul. So, after all, if you don't know what prayer is, I can no more tell you than I could tell a blind man what colour is. You must experience it to understand it.

Prayer, then, is a *personal fellowship.* It is the act by which man, reaching forth his hand of faith, touches the great dynamic centre of the Universe. It is personal and vital contact with the motor centre of all human energies. It is the coming down into the human soul of the purifying, uplifting and energizing power of Heaven. It is that which puts the glow of courage into the heart, and the beam of chastity upon the cheek. It is that

which sends a man back to his problem with a new ideal and a firm resolve. Not long ago an elderly lady remarked to me, "When my heart is heavy, I just go up to my room, close the door, and get down on my knees, and tell the dear Lord all about it. Soon my heaviness leaves me. And when I return to my work, everything seems new; the birds seem to sing a new song and the clouds seem to have gone." My dear hearers, do you know such experience? If you do, you know the reality of prayer.

It is this that makes prayer its tremendous force in the experience of every true praying life. It is this that defies all argument. In fact, there is no argument for prayer. It needs no argument. Men find that prayer is a force, and they pray. They find it is a vital fact, and they care little about its explanation. What the philosophy of it may be does not signify. Its fruit is power and peace, so what matters else when this exists?

Without this personal communion with God, the source of all life, the soul must surely fail in its robustness. Its vitalizing function is impaired. Its vision is narrowed. Its faith is weakened. With it, every day is a day of hope, every hour is an hour of power. Business men, you need it when you face each new day of your problems of commerce. Women of the home, you need it to overcome the ten thousand perplexities that meet you in your daily duty. Young men and maidens, you

need it every day as you launch out upon the alluring highway of life.

Prayer is not a luxury. It is not a passing joy. No. It is a labour. Jesus rested after praying. The spiritual sweat should be upon our brows when we are through praying. So far as energy is concerned, I should rather preach half an hour than pray five minutes. For think of what it means.—The creature spirit in vital communion with the great creative Spirit of God. Every fibre of the human body, soul and spirit is brought under the direct reflex of Heaven.

Perhaps you say, "I do not know such experiences in prayer." If you don't, be assured there's a reason for it. Possibly you have missed the personal part of prayer. A few years ago I asked a gathering of Sunday-school pupils how many of them "said their prayers." Every hand in the place went up. Then I asked how many of them "prayed." In their confusion, only two or three hands appeared. Perhaps you have been only "saying your prayers." This is the reason so many prayers are so powerless and so meaningless. They have been more of an exercise than an experience.

Count on it, God never hears prayers that are merely "said." He never hears words. He hears only His child calling or crying at His feet. There are no long prayers or short prayers in the eyes of our Father in Heaven. He never recognizes good English or poor English. "A broken and a con-

trite heart, O God, Thou will not despise." The Pharisee *said* an eloquent prayer; it was scarcely noticed in Heaven. The publican breathed but a sentence, and it moved the heart of God.

Look at our prayers, and see what many of them mean. Before we retire, weary from the toil or pleasure of the day, do we not usually pop down upon our knees, utter a few eloquent oft-repeated words, pop up again, get into bed, our prayers said, the lights out, our duty done and everything in order, and now for sleep? And then we wonder why prayer is not the life-giving, life-controlling, life-destining force it is said to be.

No. It doesn't matter much whether you pray five minutes or half an hour. Neither does the Lord care much so long as you pour out your heart in thirstful solicitation before God. Penitently, trustfully, lovefully commune with Heaven—that's all. There isn't a word in all Scripture or reason that gives any virtue to quantitative prayer. But every syllable calls for the qualitative kind. The tongue says prayers, the soul breathes them, for prayer is the very breath of the soul.

Now comes the oft-repeated question: *Does God answer prayer?* To answer this question, if you are a parent, look into your heart as you deal with your child. Or call to memory your father's dealings with you. You know you dealt in one of four ways with every petition of your child. You answered it at once as requested; you delayed your

answer; you answered, but largely differing from the request; or you could not answer the petition whatever. In every case fathomless love for your child and superior judgment guided you. In a similar way does the Father treat our prayers. For, "God dealeth with you as with sons."

Sometimes, He answers at *once;* did He not so answer the dying thief? Sometimes He delays; did not Jesus wait several days though Lazarus lay at the point of death? And when He did answer the urgent appeal of Mary and Martha, He did more than they requested; He raised their brother from the dead. So when the delayed answer comes, depend upon it, we receive ample interest on the time we've waited. Then it may be God will answer only in part; did He not so answer Paul's prayer for deliverance from the stormy sea? The passengers were all saved, while the ship and its cargo went down. It may be that, for some good reason, only part of our prayers will be answered; our health may be restored but our property destroyed.

Sometimes the answer differs vastly from the prayer; did not the prodigal receive a vastly different answer than that he should become as one of his father's servants? Yes, sometimes God so answers our prayers that we scarcely recognize the answer.

Again, sometimes our prayers as such are never answered. Surely no one on earth had greater

claim for answer to his prayer than Paul. The great apostle prayed long and fervently that the thorn might be removed from his side. But it was never removed. Yet see the reflex blessing of this thorn as we hear him declare, "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Think of it, no answer but the power of Christ upon us. Surely, after all, there could be no better answer. The thorn, the burden of your passing days, has never been removed, though with tears you have never ceased to pray for its removal. History and personal observation are full of testimony that all the while, though perhaps unconscious to you, it is becoming the sweetening, softening and saving power of Christ to you.

Then so much of the real glory and blessedness of prayers is missed because so large proportion of them are unconsciously self-centered and self-absorbed. How little Jesus prayed for Himself; how much He prayed for *others.* From beginning to end, His prayers were intercessory. Even His last petition amid His agony was for others,—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It is safe to say nine-tenths of *our* prayers are for *ourselves,* while that proportion should be for others. And thereby we miss much of the real joy and power in prayer.

Again, our prayer should be chiefly for the glory of God. Hear Jesus pray in the Garden first, "If

it be possible, let this cup pass;" finally, "Not my will but Thine be done." Then went He to the disciples and said, "Arise, let us be going." He was ready for the cross. My dear hearer, there are crosses we cannot bear till, like our great Cross-bearer, we come to the point in our prayer when we cry, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

After all, and in its last analysis, prayer is but the swinging of the soul into line with the will of God. It is the door through which we enter into submission to the highest purposes of Heaven for us. Its true answer is in the opening of our hearts' doors that the love, the peace, and the power of the will of the Father may enter us unfettered.

So, I pray not so much that God will keep me from stress or trial, as that, when it comes, I may have grace to bear it unflinchingly and uncomplainingly; not so much that I may always succeed, as that, when at times I fail, there may be given me the courage and the wisdom to rise up and faithfully try again. Not so much that God's sun may always shine above my head, as that, when the day grows dull and the night comes on, my lamp of faith may burn on, undimmed; that through calm and storm, through light and dark, through pleasure and pain, through joy and sorrow, through wealth and poverty, I may ever bear about in my breast more and more the true prayer of the Master when He prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name."

So, till we reach this upland level of prayer, *"Lord, teach us to pray."*

> "O Thou, by whom we come to God,
> The Life, the Truth, the Way.
> The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
> Lord, teach us how to pray."

We must pray. Our being constitutionally demands it. So we have no discretion any more than whether we shall eat or sleep or breathe. It is a vital exercise of the soul. Our strength and our progress and our destiny depend upon it. Then let us grow proficient in it. So that we may pray with something of the power that came to Jesus when He communed with heaven.

XIII

WHY WARS SHOULD CEASE *

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—ISAIAH 2:4.

THIS is a real disarmament text: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks." This, says the prophet, is to take place "in the latter days." In any event the nations of the world are coming together to consider the fulfillment of this prophecy. In other words, the peoples of earth are about to confer with the worthy object of turning the cost of War Armament into the channels of Peace.

But more. This is also a permanent world—Peace text. Read it again: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war *any more.*" This means that there will come a day when war itself shall cease. This is the ultimate object of the approaching Conference. We pray it may literally fulfill the far-reaching prediction of the prophet. Still further. The prophet tells us how nations are to finally settle their disputes one

* Preached on the eve of the World Armament Conference at Washington, November 6, 1921.

with the other. In the verse of our text, we read, in the Revised Version: "And He will judge between the nations." The sword shall no longer decide between nations. Armies and navies shall give place to the Judge of all the earth. "He will teach us of His ways," declares the prophet, "and we will walk in His paths." What are His ways? Isaiah tells us a little later that they are established "with justice and with righteousness." And the Psalmist says, "All the paths of the Lord are loving-kindness and truth."

I want you to note still further that all this is to come through the channel of the Church. For we read further (in the verse preceding our text): "And many peoples shall * * * say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob * * * for out of Zion shall go forth the law." The Church is to be the fountain in God's hands from which is to rise and flow down the streams of "justice" and "righteousness" and "brotherly kindness" and "truth."

Now, it is important that the nations shall first see the need of disarming. First, *Because war is too destructive.* Consider the last war. The Danish Research Society says that no less than nineteen million six hundred and fifty-eight thousand men came to death in the World War. Imagine for a moment what that means. Think of it—if these men were to start to-night to walk by this Church, six abreast, walking day and night, never ceasing,

the last six would pass next Easter morning, five months from now. If they were joining hands tonight, they would belt the earth at the Equator. If they were buried one foot apart, their graves would reach from here to Australia. The same society declares that directly and indirectly the war cost the human race 70,460,000 lives, as many souls as are in every city and village in the United States.

The world Peace Foundation says the World War cost three hundred and fifty billion dollars. Think of it—this fabulous sum spent for the purpose of destroying the world and exterminating the human race. If this amount were made up of silver dollars, and these dollar pieces were placed edge to edge, they would encircle the earth four hundred times. They would make a line so long that it would take a train running night and day at fifty miles an hour twenty-five years to reach the end.

O. P. Austin, Statistician of the National City Bank, New York City, says that the last war, up to 1921, cost the nations engaged in it, three hundred and eighty-three billion dollars. He points out that up to 1918, it had cost only two hundred and five billions. This means that in three years, since the war closed—mark, *since the war closed*—the cost of Wars, Past and Future, has cost no less than one hundred and seventy-five billions, an in-

crease in time of peace of fifty-three per cent, since the Armistice.

One item of war interest alone accounts for a large part of this peace expenditure. Before the war, the total yearly interest on the world's debt was one and one-half billions. Now it is nearly fifteen billions. Take Germany alone. It is an open question whether she will be able to meet the yearly demands upon her in settlement of her thirty-three billion indebtedness to the Allies. And this above all her own war and running expenses. And beneath it all a ruined market. Then think of Austria, dismembered and bankrupt, for the first time in history a nation in the hands of receivers.

It is an alarming fact that war has placed most nations in a critical financial state. Eleven of twelve European nations are under crushing taxation, and yet are spending far beyond their income. Three out of every four states in the world, chiefly due to wars past and future, are unable by any means of taxation whatever to meet running expenses.

Take our own Republic. The world speaks of us now as the richest country on earth. And so we are. And yet what do we find? This year the estimated deficit of our Government is over two billion dollars. Think of it, this deficit alone is more than the total amount it took to run our country any year before the war. And more. The estimate for next year, 1922, is nearly one and a half

billions. Of course, Europe owes us ten billions. But, if this armament madness goes on, where will Europe ever get gold enough to pay us?

And more, the proportionate cost of paying for past wars and preparing for future ones is alarming. Stop for a moment and think of it. In forty-six years, from 1870 to 1916, it took twenty billions to run our Government. This year alone it is taking 4¼ billions. And how much of this great sum went for wars past and future? Nearly 3¾ billions. That means 88.4 per cent for war and 11.6 for general peaceful purposes. Dwell on it for a moment, that nearly five out of every six dollars you paid this year to the Federal Government in taxes on income, merchandise or anything else, went for war purposes. And, more deplorable than that, more than four dollars of the five went toward keeping up armament to prepare for future war. For 69.9 per cent of all the Government's income (outside the postal department) goes to pay for past wars.

And, besides all this, war expenses are increasing. Take one item of interest alone, as already mentioned. The total interest on the national debts of the world is now nearly ten times what it was before the last war. The combined war expenditures of Belgium, France, England, Italy, Japan and the United States in 1912 was a little over a billion dollars. This year it will be nearly 4½

billions, an increase in nine years of over 400 per cent.

A glance at the financial condition of the world shows that these increasing expenditures spell ruin in the not far distant future. Great Britain, a former world creditor, is now billions in debt. France is stripped and staggering. Germany is all but ready to assign. Austria has already gone into the hands of a receiver. Russia's rubles are all but worthless. Sixteen per cent of the wages of Japan are required to pay the interest on her national debt. China was unable the other day to pay a note of $5,000,000 to an American bank when it expired, and wanted $6,000,000 more and was refused. Europe owes America alone ten billions. In a word, the nations of the world are for the most part insolvent.

Examine for a minute the United States. Take the Army. The Congressional Record, April 30, 1921, page 849, says that in 1916, before we entered the World War, we had 105,120 officers and enlisted men, which cost us yearly $101,000,000, or $969 per soldier. In 1921 we have 187,946 officers, costing us $393,000,000, or $2,088 per soldier, an increase of more than 200 per cent.

And yet in the face of a two billion deficit this year and a billion and a half next year, we are going ahead to build no less than 156 more war ships. And remember that each battleship, equipped, costs $43,000,000. And smaller craft in

proportion. It requires no brilliant imagination to discern the direction we are heading. It requires no seer to discern the rocks of financial peril toward which we are drifting.

Then think of the waste of it all. Take just one battleship equipped with ammunition at a cost of $43,000,000. It can hold its place at the longest ten years. And at the end of twenty years it must be junked. Whether sold or destroyed, then, its worth is nominal. In 1910, Britain sold twelve of such obsolete warships and netted only 3.8 per cent of their original cost.

Then think of how much blessing that forty-three millions might otherwise bring. The interest alone would provide a college education for all the boys who will attend the High Schools of Buffalo so long as there is a Queen City on the lakes. It would provide all the public schools needed in the city for the next quarter century. It is more money than all the Churches give any year to establish Christianity in the non-Christian world. It would send out and keep as many missionaries as the Presbyterian Church has altogether in foreign lands. In the name of all that is sacred, in the name of suffering humanity, "how can these things be?" and how can they continue?

But there is something still worse. The very existence of civilization itself is at stake. A child comes upon a piece of dynamite. If he is not careful, it may mean his death. So is it with civiliza-

tion. We have marvellously advanced in science. It has opened up a new world. It has harnessed up untold powers. It has brought to light ten thousand possibilities that lay unused since the creation of the world. The earth, the sea and the air have yielded their mysteries to the master hand of Science. And these have been used of Science to make war a process of wholesale slaughter. And it is just in its infancy. It has just begun. To-day, only the periscope of a submarine can be seen: to-morrow it will be entirely invisible. To-day, it can remain only a few hundred miles from its base, to-morrow it will go to the ends of the earth. The airships have just set out. They are still in their chrysalis stage. They have scarce begun to fly. To-morrow ten of them will carry ammunition sufficient to blow New York City to pieces within an hour. To-morrow, men in the air will press a button and whole cities will be destroyed in a moment. Science is no respecter of right or wrong. And when it speaks in the wars of the future, it will proclaim the end of things. It will turn its Master Key, the cities of the earth will crumble, and civilization will end as a tale that is told. This is not mere fancy, it is born from the cold, unmitigated facts of actual Science.

To be more explicit. Gas bombs were not used in the last war, for they were counted beyond all bounds of human torture. But, says Brigadier-General William Mitchell before the House Com-

mittee on Naval Affairs, "there is every indication they will be used in the next war." He goes on to say that New York City, for example, could be tied up in the terrific grip of crying gas by dropping about two tons of the gas on it once every eight days. It could be held in the awful throes of mustard gas by dropping over it seventy tons of this distressing gas every eighth day. Seventy tons of deadly phosgena gas dropped on it at the same intervals would practically wipe out every soul in the great Metropolis.

D. B. Bradner, Chief of the Chemical Research and Development Division of the United States Warfare Service, declares that a liquid has recently been discovered, three drops of which applied to the skin will mean certain death. Airplanes are being built, which, starting at the north city limit of Buffalo, could drop sufficient of this deadly liquid to practically wipe out ever visible person a quarter of a mile wide for a distance of five miles. If this material had been used in the World War, few would ever have returned from the front. For example, the first American Army, a million and a quarter of our brave boys, occupied a section on the Argonne about 14 by 28 miles. If the Germans had possessed 4,000 tons of this poison, they could have annihilated our entire army in from 10 to 12 hours. As it was, no less than 30 per cent of all the casualties of the last war were caused by gas. It makes us tremble to think of

the possibilities of these new discoveries. W. Lee Lewis, who invented this deadliest of poisons, tells us we are facing in future wars the most destructive chemicals the world has yet known,—chemicals that will pierce the veriest armour and mask. Shells will be made that will tear, and with them liquids that will poison. Gases will rise as invisible as ether. Gases which no sense can detect, whose attack will be as unforeseen as they are deadly. We grow sick at heart when we think of it all.

Years ago preachers frightened us into the Kingdom as they thundered the dangers of the hell in the world to come. Some consoled themselves with the belief that there was no such place. But we have no such way out of the future history of warfare. For the nations of the earth, by their mad policies of armament, have been preparing a literal hell on this earth. Whether there is a hell in the world to come, we know there was a hell on earth from August 4, 1914, till November 11, 1921. And we are just as certain that one vastly worse lies before us, if we neglect to prevent it.

How best can the nations prevent this approaching world ruin? First, they must get together. Just as the Lord said when men were burdened by their mistakes—"Come, let us reason together." Let us put our brains and our hearts and our wills together. Let us first understand each other. Let us see where each other stands; what the situation

of each is; its needs, its desires and its peculiar conditions politically, geographically, territorially, economically, commercially, socially and morally. Let us try to discern each other's basic ideals and motives. Let us study together the inestimable sorrow, the crushing financial burden and the demoralized economic conditions arising from our past and present system of arms. And more, the certain doom that awaits civilization, if this system is not removed or radically corrected. And this is what the Arms Conference proposes to do.

Further, the nations assembled must seek out fundamental universal moral principles by which it is agreed they should regulate all their international relations. They must approach the Conference in the Spirit of the Golden Rule. Each must act as he knows the other should act toward him. And, further, the prime purpose of each must be not alone how he can make out a good case for his country, but rather for all the countries and civilization itself. He must be determined on how much he can contribute to the purpose of the Conference and not how much he can extract from it for the individual glory of himself or his country. Every interest of world equity and honour and peace must be observed without prejudice or favour of any kind.

The Spirit of God has been brooding over this struggling earth ever since He first breathed it into existence. His world-wide peace He has been

breathing into the breasts of men everywhere. And now He has spoken aloud. Through the Christian soul of our President, he has called together the leading nations so that in word and deed He may articulate His desire. Never was any call more inspired of Heaven. Never was any call more important. Never was a Conference more freighted with world destiny. Then what will be the result of it?

The answer to this question lies largely in the hands of us who have declared our allegiance to the Ruler of all mankind. President Harding has clearly declared that the success of the Conference depends upon the prayers and active support of the Christian people of the world. A leading English statesman called England's attention to this remarkable declaration of our President. Then to our knees. Let us cry aloud to the Prince of Peace. Let us lay siege to the throne of God. Let our prayers fill the very air with the incense of Heaven. And let us voice individually and collectively our heart's conviction and desire for the reduction of armament and a peaceful covenant of the nations. Let us veritably storm the citadel of the Conference with voice and pen. Till by prayer and word and deed the hellish head of the dragon of war shall be forever crushed under the heel of man, and "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall learn to war no more."

XIV

RECOGNITION HEREAFTER

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall set down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."—MATTHEW 8:11.

SHALL we know each other in the next world? Will our earthly life continue there? These are questions as deep as the human soul. They never die. They always keep knocking at the door, seeking an answer. And, after all, we can see only the way God's finger seems to point.

Where God has placed an instinct, He satisfies it. He has placed in us the instinct of hunger, and He provides the food to satisfy it. In the same way He provides water for our thirst; rest for our weariness; sleep for our sleepiness; friendship for our hearts; knowledge for our brains; beauty for our sight; music for our hearing. And, so will He doubtless satisfy our unquenchable instinct that we shall know each other hereafter.

Civilization has progressed largely by learning its needs and then assuming there is somewhere somehow something to meet that need. Thus have anti-toxins and other cures been found. Thus have most inventions been made. Thus has astronomy

progressed till we read the heavens like a book. For example, Halley discerned a gap in the order of the sky which could be filled only if a heavenly body existed there once in seventy-five years. Accordingly, he discovered a comet which visits that part once every three-quarters of a century. So Halley's Comet is a fact which nature required to explain herself. So, deep laid in the firmament of our hearts, there lies a gap which can find no satisfaction till again we meet and know and love our dear ones whom we

"loved long since, and lost awhile."

Through the Bible there runs the golden thread of the Future Life. In no uncertain terms it assures us not only that our earthly life will continue hereafter, but that we shall know and love each other as in this world. "Many shall come," says Jesus, "from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven." Abraham and Isaac and Jacob shall certainly know each other according to our text. On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Isaiah appeared. Not only had they been living throughout the centuries since they left the earth, but they doubtless knew each other during all that interval. Then there was Dives. When he entered the next world he recognized Lazarus in Paradise, the man he had often noticed on earth sitting at his gate as he himself passed out and in.

Then did you ever think specially of that significant statement of Jesus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep?" To our Lord he was still *Lazarus;* he was still a *"friend;"* and he was still *"our"* friend Lazarus. In these three aspects his personal relationship to earth still existed, though he had entered the gates of death.

Now we must just use our common reason and our simple faith as we thus view our subject in the light of Nature and Scripture. If Abraham knows his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, as our text assures us he does, then just as surely does he know Sarah, his beloved wife. And, if Jacob knows his grandfather, Abraham, then more truly does he know Rachel, the wife for whom he served so many years. And if Jacob knows both his father and his grandfather, just as surely does he know his mother and his sons Joseph and Benjamin. The simplest logic, therefore, compels the conclusion that we, too, as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers, as sons and daughters and as brothers and sisters shall *surely know each other hereafter.*

Again, we hear Jesus say, "When ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and all the prophets!" Then, if we shall recognize the prophets why not the apostles too,—Paul and Peter and John and the others? And why not the early Church fathers too, —Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine and the rest of them? And why not too the saints great and small

since then? And why not specially our loved ones, whom on earth we knew better than any one that ever lived or ever will live?

We are told in Holy Writ that our future bodies shall be "fashioned like unto his glorious body." Jesus arose from the dead with his glorified body. It was his resurrection body in which he ascended to glory. But his friends recognized that risen body. Our resurrection bodies shall be like his. Then why, in like manner, shall not our dear ones recognize our new bodies? Besides, our knowledge here in part shall there be perfected. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." Think of it—our love, here begun and here broken, shall again behold each other "face to face"—renewed, expanded, enlarged, sweetened, purified and perfected. A heaven to think of it!

Without our loved ones there would be no heaven for us. Not unless a mystic work of grace would completely change our human nature. But God fulfills and perfects our nature, He does not change it. No, we cannot think of heaven without recognition of and reunion with our dear ones who have gone before, as well as those still at our side. If there is no heaven for Abraham without Isaac, nor for Isaac without Jacob, neither is there a heaven for Abraham without Sarah, nor for Isaac without Rebekah and Esau, nor for Jacob without Rachel and Joseph. Neither is there a heaven for Hannah without Samuel, nor for Mary without Joseph, nor

for Susanna Wesley without John, nor for Monica without Augustine, nor for Nancy Lincoln without her illustrious son Abraham. Never. Neither can there be a heaven for you without that precious one gone back to the Lord long years ago, and that dear heart to whom you said a sad farewell just yesterday. No—your heaven will come when you again embrace your William and your Mary, and I my Robert.

Our loved ones beyond, are still our own. They have not died. They have but gone ahead. And their leave of us has not changed their identity. They are still our dear ones. We still love them, and they still love us. Dives still loved his brothers. And Lazarus was still "Our friend." Do you remember the first chapter of that world's greatest drama, the Book of Job? You remember how Job was stripped of all he owned. But the last chapter says, "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." He, therefore, gave him twice as many sheep and camels and oxen and asses. But He gave him only seven sons and three daughters, the number he had before. Why twice the number of animals he had, but the same number of children? Why? The answer is clear. The former animals were destroyed and were no more. But the children were taken into the "Father's House" and they were *still* Job's children. Job now had fourteen sons and six daughters. And to this great faith-filled soul those in the presence of God were

as near and as real to Job as those by his side. You remember how clearly Wordsworth sang this sweet strain in his *We are Seven:*

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?
How many? 'Seven in all,' she said,
And, wondering, looked at me.

'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.'

'Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them and my brother.'"

Then, as if to catch a further gleam of the eternal in her breast the traveler pressed his quest:

"How many are you, then, said I,
If they two are in heaven?
Quick was the little maid's reply,
'O Master! we are seven.'

'But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!'

'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, 'Nay, we are *seven.*'"

Science has discovered a great fact of nature called the Law of Conservation of Energy. This means that energy may pass through many forms of expression, but the extent of the energy itself is conserved, it can never grow less.

Earthly love is the world's greatest energy. It moves the universe. It is also the very essence of

heaven's energy. So as an energy it cannot die. It will be conserved forever. God will see to it that if we do our part, the love begun on earth will never be lost—not one iota of it. It may be changed, or expressed in some other form, but it will still be the same love, expressed more beautifully and sweetly than in this world.

But you ask, what of those who cannot remember their love gone long ago? A question not hard to answer. For love sees not with eyes of flesh, nor does it depend upon the bounds of earthly memory. A few years ago I conducted a funeral in a distant place. Nearby stood a young woman weeping over a lonely grave. Returning an hour later that way, I noticed she was still weeping. On inquiry I was told she was sorrowing over the grave of her father who died three months before she was born, "Whom not having seen, she loved." And with spiritual eyes of love she will one day see her father face to face and know him as only love can know.

You ask, what of our children who die in infancy or in early childhood? Just ask yourself to make an earthly comparison. Were there a million children playing before you, dear mother, you would go straight to yours and know it in an instant. Don't ask me how: instinct is deeper than logic. Further, don't you still see the little infant of long ago still in that stalwart grown-up son and in that graceful adult daughter of yours? Of course, you do. While time lasts for you and them

and throughout eternity, you will always see the infant and the childhood wrapped up in their manhood and their womanhood. They will still be your children. A missionary friend of mine left his son of twelve in America to be educated, while he went back to China. Six years later he returned to his child only to find him a grown young man, educated and refined. He told me his joy was beyond words. He saw his boy still twelve but developed—a fuller love and a greater joy than ever filled his heart. He would have been disappointed had he found his child no larger and still undeveloped. So, my dear sorrowing friend, you will recognize your child again in a larger and fuller fashion than on this earth. He may have been crippled or deformed or indisposed on earth. These trials will all be removed, for he will be clothed with a new and perfect body. You will see him and love him just as you did here, only a hundred times more dear, more sweet and more real. As Longfellow wrote:

"Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embrace we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,
But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face."

What about the hereafter where there has been more than one husband or wife on earth? Will the marriage love continue? Will more than one

husband's or wife's love be recognized, or both? Jesus settled this question when he declared that in heaven there would be neither giving nor receiving in marriage. Then what? Jesus answered further that when we rise to glory we shall be "as the angels." The angels surely deeply love each other. But they have no sex consideration whatever. The marriage tie, as such, lasts "till death do us part" and no longer. It is then caught up into a higher form "as the angels." I once met a lady very much concerned about this question. She insisted that she should love her husband there just as here. Doubtless there are many wives and husbands like her. I can only stand on the Master's ground and say to such that whatever your husband or your wife has been on earth, in heaven each will be an angel. And you will be yourself an angel. What more you could wish I do not know. That kind of love will take your marriage love and so expand and enlarge and glorify it that it will be as far above the love of husband and wife on earth as heaven is higher than the earth. Plural marriages, like the single notes of music, will be lost in the infinite harmony of a perfect endless love.

Finally you ask, what about those whom we love who die out of Christ? A sad question. A question that calls for the utmost concern of all who love and are not prepared to again take up the love chords hereafter. Not to be so prepared is to sin against the divinest tie that binds human souls to-

gether. It is a sin against the eternity of love. And I can scarce conceive a mistake more tragic. And yet we must keep in mind that just as the Great Father Love came out after us in the person of Christ and is still seeking us in the person of God's Holy Spirit, so will He surely continue that quest till not only His Love is satisfied but ours also. We read that "before Him every knee shall bow." This means that in the great far-off finality of things, our loved ones out of Christ, will at last enter His Kingdom. In the meantime, however, we shall recognize and still love each other hereafter.

But our love reunion will be much intercepted and impeded by the fruits of sin still uncovered by the Saving Redeemer. Dives knew Lazarus and Abraham, but a gulf separated them. But he communicated with Abraham. So shall we know our dear ones out of Christ, and we shall communicate with them, though intercepted by sin. After all it is a good deal as it is on earth. However much we love our dear ones here, sin creates a gulf between us. The greater the sin the greater the gulf. Then we must be careful not to judge those who have passed away from earth presumably out of Christ. That is a matter entirely between such persons and their Saviour. Many that seem last shall be first, and many that seem first shall be last. Nevertheless, there lies upon us all the bounden duty to prepare to love together not only for the

few brief years on earth but for the endless ages of eternity. No greater duty lies upon those who are definitely preparing themselves for the blessed final Easter Morn than to do everything within their power to help the loved ones of our home to so prepare themselves. For, after all, love for our dear ones just begins on earth; only the blade grows here. The beauteous blossom and the ripened fruit await the endless Summer Morn in the "land that is fairer than day."

As Tennyson wrote of his beloved Arthur—

> "And I shall know him when we meet;
> And we shall sit at endless feast
> Enjoying each other's good."

Indeed, as we used to sing:

> "We shall know each other better,
> When the mists have rolled away."

XV

OUR EARTHLY LOVE HEREAFTER

*"And now abideth * * * love."*—I CORINTHIANS 13:13.

PERHAPS there is no question in which we are more vitally concerned. It involves our immortality. It deals with the very heart of our bereavement. Our eyes are ever fixed upon it. These dear fellowships of the earth will soon be past. Soon these precious communions with loved ones will come to an end. Then arises the question of our deepest heart, shall we meet again? If so, shall we commune again? And if so, will our fellowship be of a higher plane and a fuller blessedness? What is the answer? What does the Sacred Word reveal? How answers Nature? What speaks the soul itself?

Everything points to the belief that God never creates an undying desire which He does not in some definite way satisfy. Science has long proceeded on this theory.

Follow this principle and you will find it holds in every-day experience. You hunger, and God provides food that satisfies you. You thirst, and there is water. You are wearied, and there is rest. You are tired, and there is recreation. You love

art, and there is music. You long for knowledge, and there are libraries. Love springs in your heart and there are the dear ones in your home. Your social nature calls for something, and there are a hundred friendships and a world of fellow-humans. Can you think of a single every-day desire God has placed in your heart that sooner or later He has not satisfied?

Or, if you please, just look down over the past centuries of human history. Has not the Creator been satisfying one by one the longings of the hearts of men in their desires for a higher civilization? Men longed for democracy and finally their desire was satisfied. They longed for religious liberty, and it came. They longed for the freedom of the slave, and it came. They longed for sobriety, and it's at their door. They have longed for world-peace, and it is already in the making. Yes, deep-rooted is the cosmic principle of universal life that all fundamental longings are ultimately satisfied. Just as a true parent finally grants the genuine desires of his child's heart. Indeed, did not Jesus say, "If ye then * * * know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give."

I have dwelt at some length upon these facts, that we may be thoroughly assured that this deepest of all heart longings will one day be entirely fulfilled. For God has not two different sets of laws running through His worlds. What is true

in one part holds good in the whole. Gravitation is the same in the heavens as it is on the earth. And so with every other law. So every page of God's great book of nature and history tells us the story that we shall live again and hold sweet converse with those "whom we have loved long since and lost awhile." Yes, this deep longing our Father only waits His hour to satisfy. Hear the promise of His Word, "He satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

Many great minds have testified their faith in our reunion hereafter. Over the grave of Bunsen, the celebrated scientist, from whom we name the Bunsen burner, there is inscribed the words, amavimus; amamus; amabimus; for with his last breath he whispered to his wife, "we have loved; we love now; we shall love forever." Robert Browning, over the departure of his wife, exclaimed, "O soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again! And with God be the rest!" You remember Lord Tennyson's immortal lines on the death of Arthur Hallam:

> "And I shall know him when we meet:
> And we shall sit at endless feast,
> Enjoying each other's good:
> What vaster dream can hit the mood
> Of love on earth?"

Turning to the Word of the Lord Himself, do you recall the instance of David? You remember that when God called his child from his side, he bowed in worship and declared, "I cannot bring

him back, but I can go to him." Here is a distinct message from the Book of Ages, the World's Supreme Light, telling us in language as clear as the rising sun that we shall know each other hereafter and love each other just as upon the earth.

Lazarus was ill and his sisters sent for Jesus, who was in Galilee. But Jesus did not go at once. And in the meantime Lazarus left this earth. In a few days Jesus made to his disciples this important remark, "My friend Lazarus sleepeth, I go to wake him out of his sleep." It was the sleep of death. Now just dwell a moment on these words, "My friend Lazarus sleepeth." Notice the very personal relationship, "My *friend.*" The home of Lazarus had long been the favourite home of Jesus. It was a feast of joy to his soul to sojourn now and then in the dwelling-place of these three devoted friends of his, Lazarus, Mary and Martha. And Lazarus has obeyed the silent summons of his Creator, and is no more in the flesh. And yet Jesus calls him "My friend." Their friendship was still undisturbed by the gates of death. We know so little of just the experience through which Lazarus passed those four days. Oh, how we should like to know! It would surely add untold lustre to the problems of living, growing old, and dying. As the poet said,

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise."

But, after all, it matters little where Lazarus was in those hidden hours of death, in the light of the incomparable fact that wherever he was and through whatever experience he was passing, he was *still* the "*friend*" of Jesus. The ancient Greek Isadore declared that "Jesus wept" because he was about to recall Lazarus from his blessed habitation in the Father's House to the earthly tabernacle of time. It was like calling the mariner now in his haven back to the storm-tossed sea. It seemed like bringing the triumphant soldier back from the laurels of his victory to the pains of the battle-field. And then there is the thought that when Lazarus returned to earthly life he at once recognized his sisters and loved them as before, and doubtless more than ever.

A hundred times, yes, our earthly love goes on unbroken, though interrupted by the tide of death. And to-morrow on God's Eternal Shores it will be restored a million-fold.

"Many shall come," said Jesus, "from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." Here we have son and father and grandfather together in heaven. And, if they are together, why not all their children and loved ones with them? Surely, if Jacob is in the communion of love with his grandfather Abraham, much more surely will he be in such blessed fellowship with his beloved Rachel and his dear Joseph. And, if with these, why not with all his sons and

daughters? No wonder Jesus uses this illustration to picture to us the glories of the blessed Reunion Day when we all have been gathered Home.

Again, you recall how Jesus once said these words—"when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets." Well, if we are to see Isaiah, and Jeremiah and Hosea, why not also Peter, James and Paul and all the other Apostles? And, if these, why not the great saints of history; and, if these, why not our loved ones who mean so much more to us than any of these?

Further, is it not a significant bit of truth that just as soon as Jesus rose from the tomb, he at once communed with his dear ones, Mary and Peter and John and his family? And Paul says, "He became the first fruits of them that slept." So from his root our resurrection fruit will be like his—we, too, shall straightway go to our friends. Ah, yes, like Mary, as she clung to her dear Lord, so shall we cling to him and so shall we embrace our loved ones with the love that will not let them go. Yes, we shall all go into the Father's House and there on each others' breasts we shall drink from the depthless springs of love as deep and rich as the very heart of God. I can hear the Lord say to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Think of it, "thou and all thy house." The ark, what is it but a symbol of God's heaven. And, O, how blessed when "all" in our house have entered,

and not one missing. For "the promise," says the Lord, "is unto you and your children."

Yes, everything that may have marred our happiness together on this earth will be removed. It is the very genius of all nature to toil unremittingly that she remove every obstacle in the way of our happiness. The tree of love God is always purging. Why? That it "may bring forth more fruit." This was Jesus' Gospel applied to all of life. So chanted the prophet long before when he sang, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth." Verily, my dear friends, every tie of earthly love will then be enlarged and perfected. In the heart of Tennyson, these expectant fires burned as he thought of Arthur:

> "Eternal form shall still divide,
> Eternal soul from all beside,
> And I shall know him when we meet."

Yes, our earthly love will continue hereafter. But God intends it should be even sweeter and holier than it ever could be on earth. For that is just His way. It is His plan that every to-morrow should find our faculties and our experiences better than to-day. And so we'll love hereafter more than ever. And as one star differs from another star in glory, so shall we differ in our degrees of Love's reunion there. Why? Because our capacities will differ one from the other. Yet each reunited love

will be full. How? Let me illustrate what I mean by supposing five glasses were now placed on this pulpit, with capacities of four, six, eight and ten ounces respectively. I would pour into them water till they were all filled. All would be full, but the fullness of one would be greater or less than the fullness of another. So is it hereafter. We are all growing souls. Some are cultivating the love-capacity here by thoughts and deeds of love, so that its fullness in the world beyond will be as beautiful and glorious as the most brilliant constellation in the heavens. And some are loving so little here, they are so preoccupied with themselves or with the loveless things of life, that they are dwarfing the love powers of their souls. And one day, when the mists have rolled away, they will wake up to find the fullness of their love compared to the gleam of some sequestered star.

Ah, yes, dear friends, we are making here love's nest for the great hereafter. That's why Jesus never tired telling us to "love one another," that we might gain the love-soul. For, after all, that is the essence of human life, of all time and all eternity.

The secret of our love is found in keeping close to God. For "God is love." Close to Him here we drink deep from the everlasting fountains of earthly love. And thus we grow more and more loveful and loveable. And with it we become more and more beautiful and rich. And we rise to

greater heights of strength and happiness. But, above all, in God's great endless to-morrow the fullness of our reunited love will be "joy unspeakable and full of glory." The rays of light are nearest each other when they are nearest the light from which they radiate. So is it with our love for our dear ones. It is just as Monica said, many centuries ago, when at a tender age her famous son, Augustine, was leaving home. "My Son," she said, "keep close to the Lord, and I will do the same. For, if we both keep close to Him, we cannot at any time be far from each other." So when we sing, "Nearer my God to Thee," we also sing, "Nearer, dear ones, to you." I believe this is veritably true while still we are separated by death. Each of us forever at the feet of our Lord, we can never be far from each other. And the nearer we live to the Master here the nearer shall we dwell with Him hereafter. And then, the nearer forever shall we be to each other, and the better shall we know each other, and the deeper shall we love each other when we have all passed beyond the tide of time.

Dear, sad heart, perhaps at times you grow impatient. For the road seems to stretch out so far before you. But, be of good cheer, just a little way over the hill-top, and your journey will be complete. Just a few more ticks of God's great clock, and day will dawn, and your night's long, weary waiting will be past forever. Just a few

more hours of loneliness and then into the waiting arms of your dear one whom you "loved long since and lost awhile." Then you will see The Father's blessed purpose in all the sorrow of these lonely hours. Then you will understand why in the shadow of death Jesus said to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled."

"Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with our loved ones at the river,
That flows by the Throne of God."

Behind our text, "Now abideth * * * love" is our immortality. At the bottom of all our assurance of loving our dear ones hereafter is the fact of our inherent immortality. Jesus recognized this that day He said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled." He had just told them that soon He was to leave them. And their hearts were filled with sorrow. It was then He uttered these words that in the hour of death have been a comfort to the ages.

Why did Jesus say such words? For surely, if ever the heart is troubled, it is when a dear one has departed from us in death. The answer clearly is that Jesus knew all about His leaving them. And that if they knew its meaning as He did, their hearts would not be troubled. He knew there was no such thing as death. He never recognized death. When He went into the room of the young maiden, who lay in what everyone called death, He declared,

"She is not dead." Paul later said he desired to "depart and be with the Lord." And our great Christian poet sang: "There is no death."

And nature seems to tell us the same story. Every five or six years we have entirely new bodies. So some of us have had four and some eight and some twelve different bodies. But each of us remembers all the different bodies in which we lived. Finally the last body becomes unfit to live in. So we just move out into a "body not made with hands, eternal in the heaven,"—the most natural thing in the world to do—just to move into a better house. Jesus calls it the "Father's House."

When we move from one house to another or from one country to another, do we leave behind us our love? A thousand times—no. Where we go our love for dear ones goes with us. So, a hundred times more does our love for them go with us when we move out into the blessed realms beyond. And equally so shall we carry with us our love for our departed when one day we follow them into the glory of the Father's House.

In its last analysis, what is death? Is it not just a gathering home "one by one?" And it matters little where it is, so long as it is home—the Father's House—with the Saviour of men and loved ones gone before. For, after all, home is in essence the sweet fellowship of ones we love the most.

Then think of Jesus saying to every one of us, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself;

that where I am, there ye may be also." Those words "receive you unto myself" are very intense. They speak of blessed immediacy and intimacy with the Redeemer. And, of necessity, do they speak likewise of our love reunion with those "whom we have loved long since and lost awhile."

Time will then be past. All mountains, plains and valleys shall cease. All the enduring glory of the stars and planets shall be no more. The myriad forms of earth's passing life and power shall be forgotten as a tale. But one thing shall remain. It is the one thing that lives on earth when all else has failed. It will be the depthless, deathless love begun on earth. For, "love never faileth."

Let us, then, catch and acquire this larger view of death as Jesus saw it. And let us see in death only the diviner continuity of life. Let us see in it not a dried up stream, but an open channel; not a faded flower, but a golden harvest; not a broken hope, but an unfettered life; not a sense phenomenon, but a spiritual force; not a temporal calamity, but an eternal glory; not nature's whim, but our Father's plan.

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